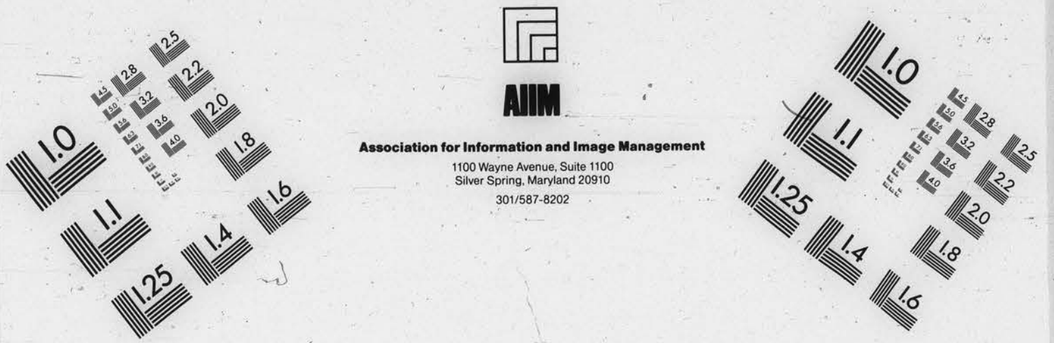
Journal, 1939.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Louisiana Journal, -- 1939

October. 26th, 1939
If you are going to Louisiana for the first time, a good way not to make it is by bee line from New York via Knoxville, Birmingham, etc.,--especially if the month be November. It is like slipping serreptiously into Heaven by way of the back door, and so missing the full effect of the Pearly Portals and whatever Spanish moss may be entangled in Saint Peter's beard,--if any.

But this drab, full brown palate will not be so important in its powers to impress if you have already in past seasons gone to Louisiana by way of the East coast and the Gulf --preferably by car. For this route markes the logical progression from Manhattan to Melrose, and Paradise is more comprehensible if one has mounted the intensifying steps of progression. It is by this route that the New York skyline evaporates as one speeds across the Jersey meadows, which in their turn give way to Pennsylvania and Delaware countryside then leaping by ferry into Virginia, pausing for ammment at Williamsburgh, and pushing on until at Wilmington the first live oaks and swaying moss hang out their tattered banners. From that point on you're in the South,--classic Orton perched in noble splendor about Cape Fear, Myrtle Beach for unrivalled surf bathing, Hampten, loveliest of all colonial plantation houses, and so on through Charleston, Savanah, and westward toward Talahassee and on and on, skimming the coast and hesitating only long enough fora leap from the car into the Gulf and on again through Ocean Springs to Biloxi and Pass Christian, fabulous for their miles of delicious houses and ancient tree decked drives. Then on to New Orleans with its pungent mixtures of old and new, of smells and perfumes and yesterday's creoles and todaysconglomerations.

Then turning North after all this, and all that summer temperature and luxuriant folliage, astonishing flowers and unbelieeable orchestrations by great insect choral societies, and you'll be in a state of mind to comprehend the mellow heart of Melrose and plantation "chateau country" which stretches in a broad belt from Natchez westward to and through the Cain River country. The two hundred mile trip up from New Oreleans will be the final opulence in icing for this most entrancing cake. Mile after mile of sugar cain fields will astonish you and above the Baton Rouge parallel you'll plung through the cotton belt which for years astonished the universe and created the greatest American design for living.

But all this is merely a prelude to indicate that this later journey was made by another route. It was dark when I said goodbye to Manhattan, and with few exceptions Manhattan, in all her luminous glory was unmindful that I was gone. Goodbye, and through the Pennsylvania tubes, and across the blackened night into Washington. A change, and then oblivion again until the morrow when at dawn I awoke to find we were traveling through the mournful foothills of Virginia,--cabins, dank and dialapadated, half hidden in the mists that seemed to hesitate whether to engulf the landscape complete or to dissolve itself into rain and diasppear.

October 27th

But what with a good thirty hours of traveling before me, I was content to breakfast leisurely, and before I was done with my coffee, the sun was winning the struggle and the veils of mist were retreating to the lower stretches of the valleys. The hilly landscape for miles was a monotoneous brown, relieved only occassionaly by the grat of a weather beaten cabin, clining tenaciously and with uncertainty to thegullied slopes, save for such spots along the rocks and the rail fences where a solitary creeper blazed incrimson glory.

Knoxville came in mid afternoon, the countryside still in a coma of autmunal brown, and toward evening Chattanouga glittered in the valley below her encircling hills. Night closed in as we quitted the city, with Lookout Mountain looming black as midnight like a great land-locked Gibralter against the deepening sky, while to the east an unbbelieable moon, as round and silver as a dollar mounted above thehorizon. Now we were in the South.

An hour of two in the smoker, talking with southern business men, a builder from Georgia who believed in higher wage scale for his employee's and who liked Mr. Roosevelt, and a Jewish manufacturer,--once from New York,--who didn't agree with Governmental wage policies but who thought Eleanor Roosevelt was really the first lady of the land. Then came Birmingham and dinner as the train streaked through the night. I pressed my face to the window pane to see if stars really did fall on Alabama, but the asteroids were all asleep. But the Heavenly bodies did what they could to maitain there ancient reputation, and so the moon, just to show what could be put on, staged an eclipse that was total and satisfying for the mongers of phenomena.

Meredian, Mississippi past midnight,--with a couple of hours for a good hot bath and shave, and then on againto Jackson where dawn began spreading an even gouash across the east, telling me that the night was done and I should sleep no more.

October 28th.

The sun climbed high out of Jackson, into a radiantly blue sky. Yesterday's browns were disappearing in completeness, giving way to patches of green in hedgerows and woodland. My sense of direction had failed me and I seemed to he going East in spite of the sun which was doing all it could to help me re-adjust myself. Vicksburg menat breakfast,--where the custom of the country made itself for the first time by the servince of a demi-tasse of black coffee before my order was taken. But I couldn't eat mc more because the prospect of the day ahead was too exciting, and besides, Vicksburg for breakfastis a little heavy anyway, what with the mashing Grant gave it in 1863. Slowly the train moved out of the station, and almost stealthily we ventured out on the great Mississippi bridge, with Ole Man River looking blue and docile below us like a gigantic canal sleeping between its great green banks of levees. Here my sense of direction returned, and we sped on toward Monroe and a hundred little cross-road stations always peopled with meek colored children , apparantly expwincing the big event of the day,--the train passing by.

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A little afternoon we reached Shreveport where Robina was waiting, Robina with whom I had exchanged so many pleasant letters and with whom I immediately sensed an old friend even though we had never met before.

Into her car, and away we flew, covering much ground and conversation as we whizzed along the flat smooth roads for a hundred miles until we turned off the main highway and headed up the three mile lane that lead to Melrose Plantation.

Before reaching the big house, we turned into a garden on the West side of the house, drove on a bit, and then stopped at our journey's end by the side gate. From out of nowhere good old Frank, the family houseman in overhalls appeared to greet us. He remembered me from last year, I think, and Robina from many a week-end trip down the years.

We went into the big house and found that Aunt Cammie was up stairs with her little grandson. When she heard us, however, she came flying down, and it filled me with extasy to find her just as I had left her the year before, lookin so good and so wholesome in her neat white waist, black skirt and her luxuriant white hair. Somehow she made it seem as though I were a long lost child who had wandered too long afield and was blessing me for having come back. Such is her remarkable spirit which brings so much happiness and cheer to so many.

Frank had already taken my bags to my maisonetter, and Aut Cammie said that the three of us would have coffee and sandwishes in my new home. So we want to the rear of the big house, where at the end of the long garden plot I recognized and marvled again at the old African mushroom house, and so to the ~~inf~~ right to a cabin with a long porch running across it, and entered what in ante-bellum days had been the blacksmith shop , but which Aunt Cammie had metomorphosed into a beautiful cabin, with the main room two storeys high, and lighted by a wonderous Louis XIV window with beautiful fan light which soared toward the ceiling. There were vases of beautiful flowers,--red and yellow dahlias of generous porportions, andother with pink dahlias with some wonderful blue flowers that looked a little like lilacs, but weren't, while on my typewriter table by the great window stook a magnificient single yellow rose in an amazing bottle shaped vase of cobalt blue. I hugged her again in appreciation and she hugged me back seemingly for the same reason,--what a wonderful woman she is.

Before having a chance to examine the house further, Frank had returned with a great tray of coffee and shandwiches, and we were all busy talking about everything and nothing, and scarcely paying any attention to what we were supposed to be eating.

As we talked, my eyes wandered about the room, -- the staircase beyond to great window, leading along the wall to the balustraded balcony above, and then down again to the great fireplace under the balcony on the west wll, and opposite the great east window.

Before we had made any inroads on our sandwiches, the evening dinner bell rang. Robina remarked that Frank would feel badly if we did not finish the lunch he had prefared for us, and so she wrapped up her last sandwich,--a generous one like mine, and took it with her. I wanted to conceal my unfinished one, took and so I hid it in the glass bookcase behind a row of books. Then all three of us went to dinner in the summer dinning room of the big house, where we met Aunt Cammies two sons, J.H. who runs the plantation and Dan, her youngest son, now living at home,--both of whom seem so genuine and well balanced. Eugene, the store keeper, rounded out are companions at dinner. . The food was marvelous, such a variety of vegatables and meats, and all so apetizing. How marvelous to forget that there is such a thing as restaurants in this world.

Supper is usually not a long meal at Melrose, and after it was done, we returned to my cabin for a long chat before the blazing fire, depending upon no other light save that from the big round moon already rising in the East and etching a great Quatorzian window on the floor from the modle on the east wall of the room.

After much good talk, to bed, and at six Frank came to refurbish my fire and bring me my demi-tasse of coffee. I asked him to bring my breakfast as soon as possible fo I had much work to do and I was hungry for more plantation food. Thinking he would not be back right away, I remembered my sandwich which I had concealed the night before, and so I took a scandalously big bite of it, when to my surpise, Frank returned with a heaping tray, catching me in the act of devouring last evening's snadwich.

Breakfast of grapefruit, bacon and eggs, milk, toast and stewed figs and coffee, and I was ready to unpack my things. A few hours slipped by but I did not notice, busy with re-agrranging books, sorting papers and exploring my house. But Frank knocked and said "The Madam say you sure do treat your guests powerful cold" and that she would like me to join them for ten o'clock coffee.

Accordingly I raced through a shower and shave and across the lawn and up the back steps of the big house to Aunt Cammie lovely big yellow and white bedroom where I dound her and Robina sitting before a blazing fire in the famous old Franklin stove which Aunt Cammie had rescued from some disintegrating plantation house

After coffee and mc talk, Robina and I decided to explore the gardens, visiting the famous old African musroom house,--once used to incarcerate obstrperous slaves in the old days when the mulato Mettoyer family owned Melrose. I was enchnted with Robina's remark that she thought it grand that these folks had the feeling of security sufficiently developed to dare bring this African item from their distant past and blandly bring such architecture into being again.

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still Sunday, October 29th:

We visited the loom house, a charming cottage where Aunt Cammie has several looms set up and weaves, and on beyond to the east to the bindery where the house, reconstructed from a former setting show the old musket bullets fired by General Bank's Federals when they passed through Cain River, burning 400 plantation houses along its banks., and then to Lyle's cabin where we sat for a long chat. Then dinner at twelve, and Charles was here from six miles down the road, having driven up in a horse and buggy, accompanied by a colt, almost as big as its mother which trots nonchalantly along side. And also to dinner were Cammie, Jr., and her husband, Dr. "enk and their baby.

After dinner much fun with photos being taken of Robina taking a ride with Charles in his buggy andafter coffee in the garden, a trip over to the otherside of the Cain River to call on the old mulato, Zeline, who lives in a cottage with the floor part brick and part dirt,--with chickens running around the kitchen, and a varied collection of religious images. Food was left with her, as well as at Madame Aubert-rocque's, also a mulatobut as neat and clean,--and probably as old as her neighbor with more emphasis on the cleanliness, for everything was spick and span. She spoke to us in both English and French and obviously was a woman of parts. While there an old woman told Aunt Cammie that one of the neighbors was still suffering from a broken ankle he had suffered a few days back, but explained that this was so because he refused to heed her cure. When asked how she could effect such a cure so quickly, she had assured her listener that it was as si ply as effictive:--just take a stick, go to the corner of the fence, make a sign of the corss in the earth with the stick and then cover the sign with a board, and presto-----. Apparently this is the type of person who recommends turpentine for the p babies when they are under the weather, for that is a common practice in certain localities near by,--much to the detriment to the baby's kidney's, Dr. "enk tells me.

And so back to the house to dinner or rather supper, which seems to be different primarily because coffee is not served at the end of the meal. . Short conversation after dinner, and so to bed, closing my first twenty-four hours of this visit to Melrose.

November 2nd. 1939

There is so much talk going on among the servants about the two holidays we are having today and yesterday that I can't recall for the life of me whether yesterday or today is All Saints Day, but it doesn't matter much, I suppose since one was All Souls and the other All Saints Day.

This morning Aunt Cammie ravaged the gardens to collect some fine flowers for sprays which she made with a bases of some fern-like greenery. Each spray she made separately,--and all by her own hands, and then sent Rita, one of the house servants over to the mulatto cemetary to decorate certain graves of old ffiends who have gone to their last reward. One of these, I recall was the mother of Madame Aubert Rocque, who herself is now 85, and other good souls who lived and died along Cain River.

At four o'clock I walked over to the church yeard to attend the service and visit the graves. Many mulattoes were already present, cars being parked along the road, and people coming on foot from several directions. I was impressed by the conservative, neat appearance of all their clothes, and the kindness with which they greeted me, a stranger.

One fine man who told me he was 50, but looked much younger, pointed out many of the graves of people I had often heard Aunt Camie speak. Milton Mettoyer, my guide, impressed me enormously by his kindly simplicity coupled with his obvious physical and social stature. For the most part the graves all showed evidence of care, although he volunteered the information that it was too bad that some of the folks, even though they had been told about the ceremony, had done nothing to put the plots of their relatives in order.

We didn't go inside the church for the service when from the graveyard at the rear, we could hear singing and prayers being intoned. Since most of the parishoners were inside, Milton seemed to think it was a good time for us to see the graves, and the decorations were colorful, sometimes tastefully done, and sometimes almost humorous.

The most beautiful one I saw was a plain gray slab covering the grave, just a few white streaks of white running through the gray stone. There was but one wreath on this grave,--a circular one with alternating white and pink moon flowers of tissue paper. It's simplicity was classic and touching.

No far away was one from which all the grass had been removed and the earth nicely smoothed. Streaks of white ran length-wise of the grave where the decorator had sown lime, and a little to one side and just over the place where the heart of the departed might be was placed a big white wreath of roses in the form of a white heart that was bleeding. . Hung on the cross at the head of another grave was a smart wreath made of paper,

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and so cotrived as to resemble a feather boa, with half of the wreath white and the other half white,--surely not realized but infinitely striking on the grave of a mulatto.

More prosaic resting places were set off by vases of articifal flowers, wreathes of curious paper flowers of curious pale blues, flaming magentas and repulsive pinks. Some people had said that food was placed on the graves, too, although I chanced to see none, although there were some tin cans that seemed to be unopen, as I suppose this represented some of these strange manifestations.

A temporary alter had been erected in the center of the cemetary to which the priest came, escorted by boys bearing tapers, and followed by the congeration. There was a short prayer, followed by announcements, the first one startling me as he said: "Now those of you who come from Bermuda.....will go to seven o'clock mass tomorrow morning".....Bermuda, I gather must refer to some nearby community and not the island. These announcements were followed by a short sermon, which left much to be wished for, since it seemed mostly concerned with Hell fire and the need for all of us to remember every hour of the day that the grave was yawning for us at the end of our road.....The sermont over, the priest departed, and the congeration relaxed and wondered about the yard, obviously concerning themselves primarily with re-arranging their own decorations and paying slight attention to their neighbors' efforts. Slowly the crowd dispersed and after chatting with a few of the hangers on, I returned to Melrose, a little late, but thoroughly satisfied with a service which had revealed so many kindly people who, at the conclusion of the harange, could giggle and laugh in spite of the dire forebodings of the padre.

Conversation in my Cabin with Aunt Cammie until late evening, and so to bed and to sleep.

November 3rd.

Up early and writing until nine thirty when I went over to the big house for coffee with Aunt Cammie for a good hours talk. Then to the store with mail, a chat with Dan and dinner. Back to write some more and Cmmie, Jr. with husband and child,--or rather without child came. They found Aunt Cammie and me in the ~~pat~~ upstairs of the bindery where Aunt Cammie has wonderful assortments of newspapers and magazines ready for sorting and binding, and some extraordinary books, including one,--fat and illustrated, on the colored descendants of a prominent man of the Natchez of ante-bellum days. I am the only one who knows it is there, Aut Cammier tells me.

Sister wanted to take some bulbs ho e with her, so Aunt Cammie rounded up Sam Brown and set him to digging in the front gardens. We sat under the great oak in the center of the front garden, surrounded by flaming cannas and golden dahlias, where Frank served afternoon coffee. A radio from the big house was playing excepts from Faust and La Gioconda. It was like an 1830 sketch of the Ange of Romanticism.

Then we drove over to Cloutierville, to sister's house. It is a beautiful old place, built in 1813 by Fontainot, and subsequently occupied as the big house in the plantation, by Fanny Chopin who occupied the place that romatic decade before the war, and most especailly that exciting afternoon in 1853 when a steamboat drew up aboard the dock on the river at the foot of her garden, blowing itself to bits, just as it touched the pier. Both Aunt Cammie and I want more particulars about that.

Last year when I visited the place it was being done over but now it was finished and was wholesomely handsome from the outside and simply and beautifully decorated inside, with the great four-poster bed making a strong impression on me, as did the two single beds in another room,--mahogny posts with yellow line tester. We had tea in the garden, and returned to the high road before sundown to all have dinner at Melrose. On the way home we passed through the Hertzog acres, not stopping at the Plantation house, at the end of its long alley of fine oaks. General Banks burned the place when he marched through, but the family partially rebuilt the place, although not pleasantly, although three quarters of the length of the columes that surrounded the place were left on their foundations, and the house somehow perched on these like a fisher folk might build their shak on stilts on the river bank, high enough to esdape spring freshets. I visited the house last year, and was depressed by its interior, the place seeming as though it might fall in on you through sheer boredom with its horrible color scheme and decoration. There is a chapel in the house, too, and this gives it an atmosphere which isn't entirely domestic. When ever I pass b the place I think of Aunt Cammie's excellent artisan, Henry Herzog, the mulatto, who is a cousin to the present Hertzogs who live in the place,and somehow all tis and the strange, dullness of the occupants of the house, makes me glad when I am going away from it.

No ember 4th.

Breakfast early, and work at my typewriter, then over to the big house for coffee with Aunt Cammie in her room at ten. Conversation flew around Louisiana and its history, and we got to talking of extraordinary women. She mentioned one who had been her guest here for a time,--I don't recall her name, but obviously interesting as a personality and a friend of various and sundry people, among whom had been Lafcadio Hearn, whom she had known in Japan and many an other. . There was also talk of Rachel Field who has spent much time off and on at Melrose, her alienist father, her sister and mother, and her love for another who has

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known Melrose and her subsequent to her present husband, Peterson.

More writing until lunch, where I arrived late, having been sen for since I failed to hear the plantation dinner bell. Charlie was here to break bread, having driven down with his horse and buggy,--and colt,--and one son, not usually here, filled in the place of Dan who has gone to Baton Rouge and LNaw Orleans for the week-end to a football game.

In the afternoon the clouds hung like a thin gray veil and occasional little sprinkles suggested rain. It appeared that a frost was in the offing, too, and so we gathered bouquets of those flowers which might suffer from a lowered temperature. After dinner, Aunt Cammie and I talked plantations and Natchez before the cozy Franklin stove. In the midst of the talk, a muffled sound in the chimney told that it was burning out. Being alone in the house, we went into the back gar en to see the flames which were blazing from the chimney and the display of fireworks which the ascending sparks made. As some of them were dropping back on the roof, we thought it wise to investigae a close hand, and so I crawled out an upper window and along the peak of the roof and stamped out those that had not burned out. More talk after the chimney had subsided and so to bed.

Perhaps the part of the conversation which fascinated me the most was Aunt Cammie's account of Melrose when she came here fourty odd years ago. The place had originally belonged to the mulattoes,--Mettoyer,--who had built the original house, now occupied by Lyle, probably finishing it in the 1820's or earlier. The big house they had built in the 30's. Possibly because of their color, their house was not burned by General Banks army when it passed through here, destroying, it is said, about 400 houses along this river. Sometime after the War, one of the snooty Prudhommes who had always lived in a high-hat manner on a plantation near by, persuaded Mettoyer to sign a note with him. Prudhomme didn't meet the note, and Mettoyer had to give his plantation in payment. Melrose was accordingly sold at auction to Hippolyte Hertzog, brother, I believe, of the Hertzogs who live in the fine place down toward Cloutierville. He had married a school teacher who had come down from Kentucky, and she mu t have been a shrew, since, when dying, she had all the servants brought to her bedroom and begged their pardons for her meannesses.

Soon after Melrose was again sold at auction, Hertzog having taken much to drink and taking little interest in his property. It was then thatMr. Henry, who was to become Aunt Cammie's father-in-law, bougth the place. When Aunt Cammie came up from Tibodou in lower Louisiana to come to northern Louisiana as the bride of John Henry, the latter's father owned several places in this section. Aunt Cammie and John lived at a place near Derry. The father had always kept a few rooms furnished at Melrose, as he came here with his wife each fall at cotton weighing time, to oversee the harvest.

On the death of John's father, the estate had to be settled. Several places had to be settled on different heirs and Aunt Cammie hoped to remain in Derry for it was on the railroad and recieved mail twice a day, and besides it was convenient to get to and from on the trains. When the settlement was finally effect, however, Melrose fell to John, to Aunt Cammie's surprise and disappointment, I believe. John suggested that they continue to live in Derry, but as he would have to spend much time at Melrose, Aunt Cammie insisted that Melrose was the place where she would live.

The condition of the house at that period left much to be desired. For example, it took her almost a week to get rid of the snuff poxes which had been accumulating on the second floor. For years, Aunt Cammie never got down through the gardens to the front gate. Her mother was living with her, and when she arrived, she had two children. I believe six more were to be added to the family in the years immediately succeeding.

And these were busy gars. First of all there were the children and Aunt Cammie taught them. School was in session from nine in th morning until three in the afternoon on the back gallery. They say she gave instructiong that during this period no one was to interrupt her unless the house should catch fire. The house, at the same time was being put through a series of alterations, improvements made with partitions being taken down to make the big library what it is today and to extend the kitchen backward, and so make room for the enlarge porportions of the dinning room.

Then there were the negroes and other colored folk. Aunt Cammie was big enough to watch out for this brood, too.

Incidently there was the household which must run smoothly, and always guests who passed by Melrose,--sometimes drummers, too, who always found open house at Melrose. Some of thes were very interesting too, and through all these visitors and her correspondence, Aunt Cammie was in touch with the world.

As the years went along, the gardens were developed and extended,--all under Aunt Cammie's expert eye. The old blacksmith shop was transformed into a grinding house for sythes etc., and then metomorphosed into the charming cabin where I am writing these lines,--with its glorious Louis XIV window with great fan light stretching more than a story high on the east wall, and like the ample mantle of the fireplace opposite, comming from the Markoe house which was dismantled some year ago.

Scraps on everything about Louisiana also grew apace in Aunt Cammies books. Before the fire last night she told me of her first one which she started at the age of ten, and how when this original tripled in number, she thought she had about reached the limit. But time has seen them grow and grow until today they are at once the envy and wonder of scholars, historians, writers and alymen,--and still the good work goes on although 57 years have gone by since the first one was started.

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Nobember 4th '39.

Slight frost last night. Arose at six to frfurbish my fire enjoy the dawn breaking through my great window.

After breakfast, Puny came to fix to fix a bath room pipe that was leaking.

Puny has an aspiring personality, quite the contrary from Aunt Cammie's gardener, Sam Brown, who always makes me laugh when Aunt Cammie speaks to him, for as soon as she says "Sam Brown" Sam says "Yaassum" and before she has finished her first sentamnce he has said "Yassum" a half dozen times without bothering to see whether or not the answer calls for a positive or negative response.

I return to Puny, however, Aunt Cammie tells me that he and his twin brother were made motherless when they were babies. It seems a preacher called on the mother and shot her through the keyhole, which is something. The ghastly details I shall try to pick up later. Her twins had been christened Otave and Gustave, but for obvious reasons they were re-christened Crook and Puny, for the stronger baby had crooked legs. Puny grew up with Aunt Cammie's children and is now in his fourties, I suppose, black, stalwart and something of a mechanic, I believe. He warmed his hans for a bit before the fire after his early morning chore was finished. I must contact him further for his obvious attempt at white man's worliness is amusing.

Sam Brown came later to interrupt my mail, --bein in search of a rope which I had placed outside its accustomed place. It seems that Sam Brown was about to finish cleaning the remains of soot from the chimney that burned out last night.

Aunt Cammie came immediately after to have mid-morning coffee and to look over scrap books with me. Back to the mail, and Regis, Sam Brown's assistant in garden affairs, I gather, came to set some traps for something that has b en trying to make the nights noisy. Finished the mail and this included a let er to Mesdames Stanton at Windy Hill Manor as a kind of good will gesture in advance of the descent we are planing to make on them shortly.

Only five for dinner today, but conversation lacked nothing in spite of the reduced diners. Conversation turned to things religious in the neighborhood and there was much laughing about Father becker in Cloutierville whom the Bi hop wants to transfer to someother post. J. H. says that the Reverend Father refuses to leave, and would sooner put hay in the church or possibly get a good Baptist minister to fill the pulpit if he is to be transfered. There is something else about Father Becker which seems odd indeed, but is never the less true. Sometime ago he built himself a small theatre near his church, and having an eye for business, used to say Mass on Sundays and avail himself of that opportunity to announce to his parishioners what pictures would be shown during the week in his theatre.

Nov. 4th--continued.

Father Becker, it further appears, is especially anxious to remain in this vicinity because of his interest in a gin mill which he operates nearby. J. H. says that when ginning time comes around and people have babies to christen, they are told to take their off-spring over to Father Becker's gin mill where he is too busy to leave bu t can just as well perform whatever rixxxx rites that are need in his extra-clerical place of business. If that fellow doesn't climb far up the steps toward the Papal Throne, it certainly will not be through any lack of industry on his part.

Aunt Cammie came over for coffee this afternoon, and talk turned to Windsor and our visit that we are to make to that locality. From that point on, plans of old plantation houses developed naturally, and we raided the library in the big house for folios containing marvelously complete drawings of plans, elevations, etc., of Louisiana places, and these plans are delightfully supplemented by clippings and pictures which Aunt Cammie has collected.

We turned to the section on HOMEWOOD, built in 1830 by William Pugh., the Virginianwho went to bed one night as such and woke up the next morning a North Carolinian. He was ripping made about this changing of the boundery line, and also because of the fact that he "was being eaten out of house and home" by travelers between two towns who always stopped at his place for the night, he sold his property and took his family and slaves to Bayou LaFourche, where he built Woodlawn. Created in a noble, restrained classical manner, Woodlawn had a main building with flanking smaller buildings, connected by galleries. Aunt Cammie can remember going there as a child with her Mother who knew old Mr. Pugh. Aunt Cammie says that the interior was sumptous, but like its exterior, a pattern for restraint and good taste. She says that child-like, she cannot remember very much about the place with the exception of one unique incident. The Pughs, like most families, had one member of the family that was slightly demented, and since in those days there was not institutions for such poor creatures, they naturally lived with the family. The Pugh's "problem child" was an ancient aunt of Mr. Pugh, a rather large woman who didn't walk. For what she lacked in foot power, however she made up for in her ability to manipulate ing her wheelchair, --a contraption which fascinated little Cammie. As conversation waxed interesting for the family group and their guests, the maiden aunt grew restive, and accordingly got her ambulating chair under way, so that shortly she was flying around the place, in one door and out the other, making a complete tour of the house, going like mad and getting nowhere fast, much to the unconcern of the family,--and austensibly to the guests who appearantly never noticed this weird performance that so tickled the risibilities of little Cammie, and hence the story sixty years later which made both of us explode with laughter.

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Grandfather Garret in iron coffin

November 5th,--Sunday. 1939.

Much correspondence this morning until nine thirty when Rita came to say that the Madam would be glad to have me come over for mid-mornin coffee. Our conversation immediately got under way along the lines we always follow with that same marvelous ~~fluid~~ fluidity of humor running through it as it always does when Aunt Cammie is present. But this pleasure was short lived as a Mr. Gibson came in the midst of things, and being pedantic, he insisted on talking about a lot of things that nobody cared about, but even Aunt Cammie was equal to this by an occasional sligh remark.

Dinner a little more extensive than usual in guests at the board. After resting, we all took a ride tix miles into the back country to call on Charles Mazurette and his horse and colt.

Charles used to be Ford representative in New Orleans and a crackerjack one they say, but his hearing failed, and so he came up to this remote place whidh he and his wife had inherited from some thoughtless relative. The wife continues to teach shcool in New Orleans while Charles lives on the place, putting the house,--or cabin back into order,--and tastefully, too, building a barn of Zephire, his cow and Ferdinand, the calf, and of course for his horse Dolly.

I guess we must be about the neighbors who are nearest to him, althoughthere are of course plenty of negro cabins between here and charlies place, the negores can not be classed as neighbors because none of them will have anything to do with him because they are frightened to death befcause, as they say, he always wears a revolver. The revolver, of course, is merely an accoustacan, but no one can convince the colored folk about that point and they give him a wide birth. Consequently Charles lives very much alone, but he has a radio which he likes and we writes poetry besides doing his farm chores, so possibly he is happy. I hope so.

In the evening back home, conversation turned to a journey Aunt Cammie made down to southern Louisiana and how she found her grandfather Garret's birthplace interesting place. All during his life he had insisted that when he died, he be buried in ancypress coffee so that his bones would return to dust as soon as possible. But the vogue for iron caskets was on the go and couldn't be resisted, so that when he died, he was placed in one of these metal coffins which were shaped like the human body and just about as thick as a man,--if ot too fat. They were imported from Europe, and sometimes a glass was put in over the face.

When Aunt Cammie visited the plantation, no one was certain whee the grave yard might have been, but this daunt Aunt Cammie, for she just hit out toward the field,--the weeds higher than her head. After sometime, without having stumbled over any tomb stones, she met a man who said he would ride his horse about through the swail, and if he found the place he would call to her and she could come in his direction. This was done and before long she heard the call and following it, she found what she had been searching for. Somehow, however, she found ore than she had anticipated, because the iron casket was actually above ground. She thought of loading the cumbersone thing into her car and bringing it back to

Isaac Irwin (Plachemine?)

she hadn't taken into account her negor chauffer who absolutely refused to ride with such a strange missle in any car he drove. And so in considertion for him, she relinquished the project temporar ily and contended herself by having the casket put back in the ground. Later, when visiting the plantation again, she found the casket kicking about some place. The present owner told her that he had had it buried several times but somehow it was always coming up, and the bones would be gathered up and placed with the casket back in the earth. Thus were the wishes of her Grandfather Garret realized so far as his cyress casket went.

There is another tale about Aunt Cammie's great grandfather, whose first name eludes me, but his son's name was Issac Irwin, and I record the latter's name, so that I may not forget to check up on his father's first name at a later time. This great grandfather came to Louisiana early, sometime in the 18th century, from Nahsville, Tennessee, where according to the story, he found that he had more slaves than he had land to make use of the labor, and so instead of selling the slaves, he came down here to a place called Plucking, or Pachem or s mething of the sort, retaining his fine Nashville property, called Peach Blossom, to insure always having a home for his wife if things should not turn out well in Louisiana. From his point of view this was well, because he did die comparatively poor in his estimation, leaving only about $250,000 or $300,000. He had a fine estate in Louisiana, however, although his monetary holdings were reduced to the above figure toward the end of his life by lack of adequate supervision, because of the bottle. I believe that both his homes, in Nashville and in Plachem still stand, although both are greatly altered. The Louisiana one embraced one feature common to the period. Along the front gallery large tubs of water were sunk half or three quarters of the way into the ground, so that the water would keep cool. When thirsty -- for water -- one would take a cup and dip into one of these great jars for a refreshing quench. Always the old man had been considerate of his colored people, and his body servant was promised, --and this was set down in his will,--that upon the old man's death, the servant would be set free and given a certain sum of money.

One day while walking in front of the gallery, the old man, cup in hand, bent over to dip out a drink,--and just what happened no one could ever say for sure,--except that the only man was found drowned, having gone head first into the great jar. Speculation has always raged about the cause of his death,--some declaring that the servant had given him a gentle push, some saying that he had committed suicide,--and this version has been recorded in certain theses since compiled, while others,--and Aunt Cammie believes,--that the old man merely tumbled into the jar and naturally could not fish himself out. I shall inquire further regarding his name and append it here if I can find the sheet.

the name was Joseph Irwin --whose unfortunate ending so confused both famil and historians.

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miniature casket ~ African House.

November 6th --Monday. 1939

Up early and dashed through a shower. Monstrosity, the big gray and white cat was my companion, having beaten Uncle White Foot to my door. When Uncle White Foot arrived, I opened the door in welcome, but Monstorsity let out one Mee-oo of no uncertain meaning to Uncle White Foot apparently,, for he turned tail and flew.

The early morning news reiterated the City of Flint incident with its repercussions in diplomatic fields, but the item that was most striking to these "southern" ears was the fact that President Roosevelt had driven through the snow to go to the Hyde Park church yesterday. I hope my little friends in New York escaped that early manifestation of Winter which seems so far away down here.

I took a six or eight mile walk before eleven, and on my return had a little chat with Aunt Cammie. What a pity science hasn't invented a little collapsable machine that could record such conversations without having them distracting by their visiaility.

Dinner in reduced numbers,--only five present, and afterward to the African mushroom house with Aunt Cammie who wanted to show me something there which she keeps hidden from the colored people. It is a minature casket,--about a foot or 18 inches in length,--with the other measurements in porportion, and the whole thing painted black. It came from De Soto Parrish and once had a part to play in the lives of certain inhabitants of the County seat,--the place begins with M, but I don't recall it exactly,--something like Madison, which it isn't. But to get on with the story: It seems that a number of years ago,--during reconstruction,--the period should always begin with De instead of Re,--there was considerable trouble in maintaining any continunity in labor because the negroes were forever packing up their duffle in one place and moving overnight to another. Being superstitious, the correction of this cripplinghabit could easily be corrected if one could only hit upon an idea, and the black casket was it. Frequently on Sundays the negroes would wander off to find a different cabin to live in, and that night they would move, but being long on talk, they usually spoke of their plans to anyone they chanced to meet. It was therefore not difficult to know where a family might be heading for before he had reached his cabin to pack up his belingings, and it was then that someone would take the black casket and , without being seen, place it on the doorstep of the chosen habitation. Arriving at their newly selected quarters, the negroes would consider this casket as a evil omen of vast portent, and would accordingly fly back to the place they hail from as fast as they could shuffle. It seems curious that they never kept going in any other direction than back home, for if they had done so, of course, there wouldn't have been much point in planting the casket in the first place. But the ways of these people are not to be understood readily, and the important thing is that they inevitably did return to their point of origin, so that this little casket really did play a noteworthy part in getting the locality settled down. Naturally Aunt Cammie's consideration for her own colored people impells here to keep this magical casket out of sight. I doubt if this story has ever been recorded.

November 6th.

Up early and a long walk to Montrose, along Cain River and back, probably eight miles or so. Back in time for dinner, after wich Aunt Cammie and I explored the Black Coffin in the Mushroom House as described above, and then she rounded up Sam Brown, the Yasssum M an, Regis, and a couple of other dusky youths to deliver her pecanes to the store for sale. I can never get over how much like kittens these people are,--always in a playful frame of mind, tumbling around over each other, and invariably ready to frisk about in harum-skarum confusion whenever Aunt Cammie says: "Now Sam Brown, you..." with Sam Brown always chiming in "Yasssum" before anyone gets a chance to get further than the first couple of words in the sentence. I often wonder if he realizes what a razz seems to impregnate that "Yasssum", so somehow he always seems to be proclaiming the sudden realization of s me Heaven-born truth regarding some great and unalterable law of the Universe, even though the interrupted sentence in its entirety may be of no more consequenc than:"Now you, Sam Brown, you fly up stairs and get Mr. Francois a match". Such leveling of everything to a certain valueof questionable account cannot help but set me wondering if he is merely acting dumb and poling fun at the world and everybody in it for ever having the nerve to think or do anything.

But it is fun to watch him perform, for he never moves beyond the pale of "Yasssum" and rolling his eyes in surprize, no matter how commonplace the remark may be. But I guess in some respects he must a be a little lacking, for Aunt Cammie says Sam Brown always babbles everything he hears, and surely this is no sign of conceal wisdom, and it seems to me I sense a certain frigity and disdain in Frank's attitude toward him, for Frank can witness or overhear anything, yet no one ever hears him refer to it. But Frank is unique and consequently a little bit alone among the others, but his confidence which the household gives him no doubt recompenses him for the void between him and the rest of the house servants like Sam Brown and Regis who are always together capering about the place, "Yassum-ing" when in the presence of members of the other race, but always giggling and jumping about when, as is usual, the tow of them are working together alone.

The mail was good yesterday. A short note from Stewart and one from Lydia Lee which did my heart much good. It contained phrases that we all found good, and clippings that we shall explore later. A large package also arrived,--a gift box from the office, with a lovely card signed by all my former associates which always does something to one in contemplating the extraordinary place friendships hold in our lives. A grand scrapbook, marked Louisiana, much typewriting paper and carbon, cigarettes, magazines and papers from L.....

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November 7th, '39 --Tuesday.

Gray sky today but no liklihood of rain with the temperature balmy so that the fire is more for the cosy atmosphere than for prosaic purposes,--what with all the windows and doors open.

Much mail in the morning and after dinner Aunt Cammie visited me and we ran over the story of the Prince of Futa-Jallon together in anticipation of our visit to Foster's Mound shortly.

Aunt Cammie dictated a few pages from her correspondence with a lady in Alexandria, recounting the story her 112 year old Mandie had had told her.....

As is generally known, there is a vast line of demarkation between the negor and the mulatto, the latter feeling very superior to the former. This feeling is particularly manifest when the negro invades the mulatto church for the formers funeral service, as sometimes happens the the negro may be too remote for conveninece in holding the services. Once a local curate, presiding over a mulatto church, held a fair in Nachitoches, and purposed to put a banner over the tent of his church's booth bearing the sign: French Creole. This is probably what the mulatto would have liked to have emblazoned on the sign,--even though most of them cannot read. It is true of course, that many if not most of the mulattos are descended from early French Creoles, but their color prevents them from making French Creole their label, since there are too many proud white descendants of the same or similar parentage,--minus the color.

But it was only yesterday that I learned why the mulatto is so resentful of being called a mulatto. Of course, it was Aunt Cammie who solved this mysetery. It seems that a negro servant had some discussion with a mulatto with a mulatto cook in the kitchen of the big house. The argument reached its zenith when the negro called the cook a mulatto. One of them, in reporting the disturbance, to Aunt Cammie said:"You know, Madam, that nigger called us mulatto. And we all aint mulattos because you know we can pr reproduce our kind, and everybody knows that no mule can. No, mam, we aint no mulattoes". Curious, how just one sentance like that can unlock all the resentment that a people feel for the name that is given them.

Sister and family for dinner, and just at it's close, Robina arrived from Shreveport. Later in the evening, She and Aunt Cammie came over to my house and we read aloud the Sidnor story about the African Prince who became a slave in Natchez where we expect to go tomorrow, to visit the plantation where he lived.

Nov. 8th --Tuesday. 1939.

Up early and through a shower and shave, with a leisurely breakfast before thecheerful hearth which is more decorative than necessary, what with the balmy air and bright sunshine streaming through a gauze like cloud of early mist. A little music and news on the radio and much warbling from the mocking bird in the pecane tree outside my beloved Quatorze window.

Over to the big house a little after eight, with Robina all ready and Aunt Camie with a smart looking hat on--the first time I have ever seen her wear one,--seeing the various servants and pointing out final instructions, including admonitions not to burn the house down while we are away. A few moments more and we are on our way down the three mile lane toward Montrose,--and on to the main highway,--headed toward Natchez.

Passing first through Nachitoches, Aunt Cammie recounts the stories of many an old house in the town,--older by far than New Orleans,--pointing out the lovely iron work on some of the gallerys, and recounting humorous tales of struggles between the old and the new streams of civic developement which forever surge through these lovely old place. Then on across the Grand Ecore and the Red River, with much information,--sprinkled with humor, concerning activities here before the Revolution and during the Confederate War. Through long stretches of pine woods, greener than usual in the morning sun, and on through Winfield where Huey Long had started from, andso along to Trout where we had a blow-out, quickly patched up, and thence through the vast flat plains, dotted here and there by clumps of trees indiciating the presence of plantation houses, and endless more plains where Natchez Brahmins had gathered gold from their cotton crops to build their mansions across the River in Mississippi.

Finaly to Ferriday,--an old town which has been moved back from its old position nearer the River by the Government which is cutting a canal through the site of the old town to straighten the course of Old Miss,--and they save Natchez. At Ferriday we noticed vast construction on the emplacements for the new bridge which leads to Natchez,--and when finished, will eliminate the isolation and much of the almost forgotten ante-bellum charm which it typified so well last summer when we were there and when the nearest paved road was fourty miles away and this fabulous Plantation region was a veritable forgotten Eldorado of Architectural and historic grandeur.

We crossed on the ferry in bright sunshine about nooh, surveying the cliffs of Natchez on the opposite shore. I suppose it is because I have had the place in mind so often during the past year that it seemed as though I were merely returning to the town after a morning's drive.

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November 8th, cont.

We climb the road from th ferry to the town, remarking upon the old, sinister looking "dives" of Natchez-under-the-Hill, were only last summer, in altering a place, a dozen skeletons had been uncovered in one cellar, and contrasting this life of such a hell-hole of steamship days with lovely Magnolia-in-the Vale,--just beyond, where a lumber company is doings its best to clutter up what is left of the fabulous old gardens,--once the pride of the River, and now for the most part gone into the gray waters of the stream itself.

We headed straight for Edith Wyatt Moore's and found her at lunch. Looking well, and as cordial as ever, she apologized for not having done much with correspondence, and would have continued the conversation indefinitely if we had not suggested that we go to eat, and she avail hereself of the interim to prepare for her trip tomorrow which she is to make into Iowa and Heaven knows were to lecture to Museums and Garden Clubs on Natchez,--and the Pilgrimage. Only some slippers that were being dyed disturbed an otherwise open afternoon which she would like to spend with us. Dyed slippers, I thought,--we haven't been in this town five minutes, and its curious atmosphere is already getting into my hair.

And so Robina and Aunt Cammie and I went to lunch. It was hot,--and Aunt Cammie had already foresaken her hat,--and I like a nut, wore mine, and left it in the restaurant. But I eventually got it.

Bacak to Mrs. Moore's and nothing to do but I must go to the back of the house to see the cat which we had rescued as a starving kitten last summer in deserted Belmont Plantation. It was darker than Egypt in color and as wild as a Tartar in behavior. Then I had to meet an energetic darkie who told me he was not John greenley, as Mrs. Moore had introduced him, but rather he was John Greenly, decon of the of the Springvale Baptist Church. With this impor ant correction accomplished, this pillar of the church leaned on his axe as though both of us had a nice long afternoon to spend in senseless and idle chatter, but I was thinking of my friends in the car, and the weather which was hot, and of Foster's Mound which I wanted to find before Mrs. Moore had to leave us in quest of her dyed slippers. The negor was talking right along, and I remember hearing him say: "I'se a powerful speaker. I can say the biggest words and when I den speak up hare in Yazoo City, I says:"'Friends, Population anf beloved Brethern'.....But Time was marching on. I was determined to march, too. And so I broke in on him, telling him that I was impressed and that I would be back in Natchez again and that I would come to his church some day when he wasn't so busy and hear the whole speech and some singing, too, if he would like to warble for me. He agreed as how he'd do that, and sowe returned to the car and the three ladies and I headed toward Washington, Miss.

It's five miles from Natchez to Washington,--a fine cement highway, with many a fine and historic house along the way, including Devereux and an adjacent neighboring property, built in the grand manner of the 1850's near Washington Natchez and the charming planter type house of Mr. Wales with its sweet little red brick church near Washington. Between these two points, there are numerous roads that turn off to right and left, and if these were followed, one would find fine plantat ons at the end of each, and in many cases, roads that divided from these secondary routes that would lead to other plantations. It is really astonishing how many of these houses still remain, but even more astonishing how many there were that have long since disappeared. Md. Wales remarks in his diary that "on every little hillock in this region on may see a splendid villa for miles around". This was written at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and before the span of a hundred years had gone, scores of these had disappeared and scores of new and finer houses had replaced them, just as a hundred years before Mr. Wales a whole net work of plantations had existed, flourished, faded and re-appeared.

At Washington, we turned sharply to the left, and traled along a forgotten road about five miles, turned them to the right and traveled another mile, passed the Dangerfield plantation with its story of the duel over the hand of its beautiful heiress and its limitations of property contiguous to that of Colonel Foster. We turn slightly right again, descend a gulley, cross a little bayou, up the other side, and a few hundred yards beyond we turn in at a white painted gate. This is Colonel Foster's place. The country round about is flat, with a pleasantly planted yard or garden to the right, while to the left rises abruptly out of the plain the famous, --but unknown --Foster's Mound. Obviously created by Indians long ago, this mound, perhaps two or three hundred feet long and a hundred feet wide, is surrounded at its base by a luxuriant green hedge, and rising gently up a grassy slope, is encircled by gigantic old live oaks which half screens the fine old Foster home which crowns the mound.

It is,--like the mojd itself, a long oblong pile,--with a gallery running along the entire front of the house, and another in duplicate running across the opposite side. Mounting the stepps up the side of the mound, we step onto the front gallery,--one story high,--the other half story of the house concealed behind the gallery roof. The ceiling of the gallery is painted blue, and the white square columnes define the limits of this elevated promenade, seeming not unlike a precious Mount Vernon set in a grove. The windows on both gallerys are almost as ample as the entrace itself, with this exception, that they lack about a foot of reaching the floor of the gallery. But if one notices it, this remaining foot of space is divided into two little doors on hinges, so that at will, these may be swung oven with the windows, so that one may step from the rooms on to the gallery, when these are open, without taking a step over what otherwise would seem a baseboard.

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November 8th, --continued.

We step into the hall of this charming plantation home where Prince had worked for so long as a slave. the hall runs straight through the house from the front gallery to the back one. A curved arch overhead indicates the middle of the hall and of the house. To the left is a series of rooms, one suit facing tye front gallery and the other the rear gallery. I imagine these may have been the bedrooms of the first floor in Colonel Foster's day. ¶ Returning to the hall again, we explore the other rooms, laid out in the same manner as the others,, that is the house being divided in two the long way, each of the rooms,--and there are more on this end --facing either the front or the back gallery. I imagine these rooms were the living rooms, drawing rooms and dinning rooms. There are several fireplaces in each eand of the house, with closets behind them for keeping clothes warm in winter,--and possibly food, too, after it had been transported from the kitches which were in the rear of the Mound.

The Foster plantation itself, so far as is known, was established by the famous Colonel's father,--an officer in the American Revolution who came to Mississippi with his family from North Carolina. The Fosters were successful planters, and after havin built this plantation on the top of the Mound, the old man continued to live here for a number of years, when at his death, the property passed to Colonel Foster, who operated the place successfuly, and of course became prominent not only because of his standing in the community as a straightforward and wealthy planter, but also because of his possession of the African Parican Prince. The family graveyard is across the road and down toward the bayou a bit, and in January when the weeds are down, we shall explore this spot and so gain further particulars regarding the Colonel, his lady and several of his children who are doubtlessly buried there. Today the house is owned by the State of Missisiippi as an experimental station.

I don't recall exactly where I stopped, as five hours have elapsed since the paragraph immediately above. Alexander Woolcott and Mr. Henessy arrived at four this afternoon in time for coffee, followed by supper and are now in Lyle's cabin,--asleep

But to get back to Foster's Mound. As one enters the place from the main road, one may follow the old carriage path which drives directly before the mound,--lengthwise, and at the far end, swings in a graceful curve slowly upward, coming to an end in a little courtyard immediately to the rear of the house, letting the travelers in the old days out on the rear gallery. In a room just inside, a small staircase ran up to the second floor which was divided into three rooms, -- one large central one, and two large cheery rooms at the far ends of the house.

November 8th,--continued.

From the rear gallery, one looked down on the fields stretching out below. About three hundreed feet to the left, and well back from the road stood the former slave quarters, where Prince obviously lived while at the Mound. These slave quarters of brick have long since disappeared, but Mr. Mallorie who is conncected with the Mississippi Experimental Station tells me that in ploughing, these old bricks are frequently uncovered.

To the right of the house, and possibly half a mile away,--although possibly a little nearer, is Saint ~~Francis~~ Catherine's Creek and Bayou where prince once ran when he he had been at the Mound only a short time after his arrival from Africa. Starvation and insects eventually impelled him to return to the plantation, and it was then that Mrs. Foster nursed him back to health, incidently breaking his spirit of obstreperousness so that during the years that followed, he became one of the most faithful of slaves. One story has it that he became a house servant, although this seems rather strange, for if he had been one, I cannot imagine how he should have been at Washington, Miss., with plantation sweet potatoes for sale on the day that his old friends of African days should have passed that way.

Mr. Mallorie was very kind, loaded us with quinces, and told many a tale about the Mound,--the seven or possibly four other Mounds on the plantation where Boy Scouts come after rains to gather up pottery and airrow heads. According to an old slave on the place, who says his grandfather told him the story, the mound on which the residence is built was made at the order of an Indian chief who was almost washed out with his Village while camping on that ground when St. Catherine's Creek became entangled by logs and thus flooded the flat plain. The idea was that this long rectangular mound should be constructed to ~~xxxxxxx~~ build his camp site on so as to be sure of avoiding feet feet a second time. With all the other mounds about the plantation, this story seems rther unlikely, although no one ever dung into the one on which the residence is located, so that theory hasn't been investigated,--and I hope never will.

We took a few photographs of the Mound before leaving, but I presume these may be of questionable interest, since the gigantic live-oaks which surround the place cast such a heavy shade that little or nothing of the house itself will show.

But time was pressing, and we were headed toward Windsor, which we wanted to see before dark, and so we returned to Washington, and hence to Fayette and Lorman whence we turned onto a gravel road, and shortly were in the traces again, in the old highway that lead to Alcorn College, the negro school which was instituted at Jefferson College which this used to be before the Confederate War. It was where many a rich planter's son received his formal education.

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Nov 8th --c ntinued.

At Alcorn we stopped for a moment to view the famous iron steps in front of the lovely classic portioced building,--the steps having come from the ruins of Windsor. Thence we drove to the ruins two miles beyond Alcorn, for the sun was getting low, and we wanted to see them before x too late since Aunt Cammie and Robina had never been there before and would accordingly like to get more than just a passing impression. Robina was disappointed in their size when she saw them from afar, but was properly i pressed when she had reached them. The are on a plain where now only a few giant live-oaks stand, but once the whole property was covered by these marvelous trees.

It was dark when we left, but we decided to return to Natchez by way of Rodney, the dead little town which once had been a great River port for that plantation region, but which had suddenly receeded in importance when the tempermental old Miss suddenly moved eight miles away from her former course, leaving Rodney high and dry.

All the way home, Mrs. Moore told us of local Natchez news, the highlight of which was that Mrs. Swann who had entertained Christian and me last year at Homewood, which she has so lavishly spent money on with such infinite good taste, had been asked to resign from the Garden Club, so that her house is no longer on the Pilgrimage. Mrs. Moore says the resignation was in order becasue Mrs. Swann pinched some of the visitors during Pilgrimage I guess thes must be more to this story--much more,--since Mrs. Moore, I'm afraid, never did like Mrs. Swann.

All four of us arrived at the Burton restaurant where we had dinner and chatted for a while afterward before saying goodbye to Mrs. Moore who leaves tomorrow on a lecture tour. I am wondering how ever she came out with those dyed slippers.

November 9th. -Thursday.

Natchez seems more busy in matters of business this year than last. After taking Mrs. Moore home, we looked for a place to stop, and found that most of the hotels and homes we had known last year were full-up. We accodingly scouted around a bit and found a suite at Hotel Lola. My bed was ante-bellum in fact I cannot remember ever having slept on a cleaner "park bench" or a harder one.

Before leaving Mrs. Moore we admonished her not to mention our presence in Natchez, for we felt she might report it to the DEMOCRAT, and if we were mentioned in that paper the whole town would be after us as soon as they read their morning paper. Mds Wall at the Briars had invited Aunt Cammie to stay with her whenever in Natchez, and while the home is lovely--Mrs. Jefferson Davis' girlhood home,--we couldn't let anyone know that we were in town or there would instantly start up a round of come here and come there, and our visits to the old plantation houses in the surrounding neighborhood would disintergrate into a elegant bog of teas and suppers and evenings here there and the other, and we would have no chance to do what we pleased.

We accordingly were up and doing at a little after seven, and headed first for Windy Hill Manor with a view of inviting Mesdames Stanton to dine with us at noon in town. The five or six mile drive to their beautifully situated ruin is a joy to the eye and the imagination. The cement road is one of the lovely old traces, with glorious ditches on either side of the highway, over which arches magnificent old live-oaks and magnolias, bannered with torn draperies of Spanish moss and arabesque vines.. Turning from the main highway, we entered the plantation itself, and drove down winding roads and up and up more winding traces, noting along the two miles progress the remains of the old brick terraces that had once been the glory of their mother's landscaped gardens,--now all but lost from view.

Up one final stretch through these woods, and the long greensward of Windy Hill Manor spread out before us, flanked on three sides by luxuriant trees and flowering bushes, with the fourth side punctuated by the white columns of the dilapidation which is the Manor.

The porch had the usual accumulation of curious cast iron furniture of the Victorian Age, some curious brackets to hold plants,--and at the far end of the porch where the rain must always beat when there is a storm was placed a wonderful old mahogny secretary,--low as an ordinary dinning table, and standing on a single central pedestal of pleasant lines. The top of the desk was open and one could see many little pigeon holes where once sweetscented billet-doux or possibly papers of vast import had rested,--but the whole lovely piece now consigned to diintergration by a whim of Miss Elizabeth as we later learned.

We banged on the door madly but couldn't rouse a soul. We waited ten or fifteen minutes, knowing that it always takes

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the girls hours to make up their minds. Besides, it was only about nine in the morning and probably they hadn't removed their Lady Ester at such an hour.

Finally we heard the great door squeak ever so slightly, and Miss Maude's voice called out "Who's there?"

When she heard that it was Mrs. Henry, she said: "Not Miss Cammie" and when assured that it was even so, she said "Why come right in".

So Aunt Cammie, not having seen Miss Maud as yet, pushed the door open but she found the hall with its lovely staircase void of an human being, for in the twinkling of an eye, Miss Maud had bolted from the entrance door to one leading to a former drawing room on the right and had barricaded herself securely from sight behind it.

Explaining that she was just pealing onions and could not therefore greet such distinguished guests, she asked Aunt Cammie to wait for a few moments while she could bet herself prperly gowned, but Aunt Cammie hastened to explain that we were not there for a call at such an early hour, but had merely dropped by to ask them all to come to lunch in Natchez with us at noon, explaining that we would return for them at twelve to pick them up, but Miss Maude declined to accept. There was hurried whispering behind the door--obviously with the other two graces, and then it was explained that Miss Elizabeth was not well enough to journey to town but that they would be delighted to have us return this afternoon for tea. Later in the day, Miss Maude explained to Aunt Cammie that in reality Miss Elizabeth was perfectly able to go to town, but the plain fact was that she simply didn't have a gown that was suitable for her to go to lunch in town with us.

And so we said Au revoir to our unseen hostess and returned to Natchez. We called on Mrs. Johnson, the mulato widow of the well-known mulato Dr. Johnson who died in Natchez last summer while we were there. Mrs. Johnson has been disposing of some of the Dr. Johnson's library,--Louisiana State University having bought some of it. She is also selling some of their furniture,--several of the pieces being fine, and Robina wanted to purchase a little glass-covered clock. Mrs. Johnson is a kindly woman,--possibly between fourty and fifty but rather inclined toward timidity. She let Aunt Cammie and me go through some of her books but most of them were in cases and we shall have to look at those later in the year. We did enjoy looking though two large volumes, however, one the issues of a New Orleans paper of 1829, containing curious notices, advertisements regarding steamboat travel, auctions, local gossip etc., and another volume of a Natchez paper for the year 1936, I think, equally intersting in its mirror like reflection of an age which was golden in Natchez. We asked if she cared to sell them and she wasn't sure. Obviously she wanted

through Mrs. Moore, still a little uncertain as to whether she should get rid of anything before Mrs. Moore had passed on it. There is another reason, too, as she explained to Robina, and that is she loved her husband dearly and even though she may never read most of the books herself, she loves to fondle them from time to time because he loved them so much.

While discussing the clock with Robina, she further explained to her that the life of the mulato was not an easy one, being caught between two color lines and thus having to ride twice as many storms as the negro must. "For a hundred and fifty years we have had to bear this", she confided to Robina, "and in spite of the experience of hardship, it doesn't grow easier."

Robina eventually got the clock, but we didn't get the New Orelans and Natchez newspapers, but we probably shall a little later. Aunt Cammie, grand as ever, invited Mrs. Johnson to Melrose to see the library here. Mrs. Johnson was touched, and promised to come over sometime, possibly with Mrs. Moore when and if she comes.

Robina remarked to Aunt Cammie that she thoght she was noble to issue the verbal invitation, particularly in view of the probl ms that it would create here at Melrose, but Aunt Cammie, with her usual disregard for problems waved the considerationx aside, merely sating:" Of that's all right, darlin, when Mds. Johnson reaches Melrose, we'll handle that situation in some way. I'm going to entertain Mrs. Johnson and we'll have dinner, even though I may have to engineer a pinch to Grand Ecore to get food into everyone".

It seems the problem of having a mulato as guest at Melrose is complicated by the fact that so many of the servants are mulatos here and there would be a rumpus in that camp if a mulato came here as a guest,--but Aunt Cammie will ride that storm alright.

I suddenly recall something I heard yesterday regarding the negor and mulato business in these parts. It seems that all the negroes hereabouts celebrate Emancipation Day --June 19th,--as a kind of Fourth of July,--much pincic and general carrying on. It would be unthinkable for them to labor on June 19th. But on June 19th, every mulato on the place insists upon working,--they will even stagger from sick beds where they may be passing out to labor on June 19th, because June 19th for them is no holiday because they say that mulatoes aren't negors and never were slaves and will work harder that day than any other in the year just to make their position in the color line clear.

After l aving Mrs. Johnson's we started out in a search for an old deserted mansion of which we had heard yesterday,--one for some strange reason Mrs. Moore had never heard of. It was reported by a couple of youths who had been tourning the region on bicycles las year, and I thought the opportunity excellent to explore it.

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November 9th -continued.

We accordingly took the high road toward Washington, and Fayette, and we spun along pretty fast, talking much of the plantations that were hidden away at the end of the numerous little roads that turn off the main highway every few hundred rods. At Lorman, we turned right on a gravel road, called Red Lick, and continued for two miles. There we turned to the right, entering the drive of Hayman Plantation,--I am uncertain of the spelling, but the word sounds like Hayman. Continuing along this plantation road for about a half mile, going up and down minor grades, we passed by fine old oak trees and evidences of hedge plantings which indicated the drive of the road in days of its departed glory.

We stopped our car about a hundred feet from a great sad portioced house which stood at the far end of what had once been a hedged garden and approached the house. A number of sweet little colored children were peaking over the flower beds and from behind the columns. An exact replica of Aunt Jemima ceased her labor at the foot of the front flight of steps, resting her ax on the great chuncks of wood which she had been splinting into kindling wood. She greeted us politely and referred us to "the Missus" when we asked if we might see the house. The "Missus" proved to be a young colored woman--in early twenties, I should say, and mother of the half dozen pickaninies who by now were quietly standing about the gallery like chickens expecting to be fed but careful not to make any miss-steps before the grain is sowed before them.

In a sweet voice, "the Missus" sowed us the house, pointing out that she only swept the lower floors because just that took all day most,--which I could readily imagine might be true. At the same time, my mind turned toward that old house up in Louisiana that Aunt Cammie has visited. That house has a quarter mile of gallery, so they only sweep part of it, fearing, and justly I suppose that the broom situation might otherwise easily get out of hand.

But returning to Hayman: The front of the house is not unlike that of Melrose in Natchez,--but slightly larger, I should say. It seems to me that the columns are larger and that the house itself is wider. Stepping into the entrance, we turn about and drink in the glorious color of its Bohemian glass side lights and fan. Over the door is the word "Shroder --1857." The hall is heroic and runs straight from front to rear of the house, with a fine mahogny railed staircase starting upward near the rear door, and slanting toward the front of the hall. The fan and sidelights of the rear door are equall in color and beauty to those of the front. Returning to the entrance, we turn to the room at the right of the hall. It is enormous, containin four or five windows

lo

November 9th -continued.

two windows looking out on the portiocs, probably,--and these with the little foot-high gates below the window itself so that the guests in the house might step directly from the room onto the gallery,--and two windows on the adjacent wall, with a fine large fireplace in tween these. The next wall,--and opposite the windows looking on the portico is as huge a set of folding or sliding doors as I have ever seen in an old plantation house. All the hardware,--knobs, keyholes, etc in these rooms are in silver. There are beautiful plaster cornices, handsomely decorated. In the corner of the room is a regulation size bed, which looks lost in the room, and in the other corner next to the folding doors a poor kind of dresser. Both the dresser and bed look spotless and clean. The floor is well swept too, making it seem even more barren, I suppose. We pass through the great folding doors and into a room of the same huge porportions, which is a dupliacte of the room we have just left,--huge windows, beautiful plaster work, etc. This room leads to a back gallery of the house which once was screened for some of the old blinds are still hanging on. We cross the great hall that leads through the center of the house and find two more rooms exactly balancing the two we have just left. Still the same fireplaces, plaster work, silver hardware, etc.

We then mount the stairs and find on the second floor the replica of the same great hall with fine side lights and fan windows at each end with their beautifully colored glass, and on each side of the house a swite of two rooms each duplicating those below, and each containing the same fine old fireplaces, etc., with this additional feature, -- the windows in many of the rooms are partially out and plaster has fallen in grat gobs all over the place. I don't wonder the poor kind "Missus" doesn't sweep up here.

We mount another staircase from the secondstory hall, and reach the antic. We had all hoped there might be some forgotten books or bric-abrac up here, but nothing at all remains of the treasures that unquestionably filled this mansion at the time when cotton was making millionaires and the Confederacy had not been born.

We return to the first floor again, make one more tour, and then explore the rear of the building, noting where the slave quarters may have been and following the brick sidewalks from the house to where the kitchen and offices were probably located. Back to the left of the house are great cisterns buried beneath the ground. Beyond was obviously some kind of a garden,--either vegetable or flower.

We return to the front gallery, take pictures of the entrance, with the present occupants of the place grouped before the door. As yet we know nothing of the history of Haymans, but we shall find it one day. It is high noon, and we must get back to Natchez for luncheon, but the thirtyfive mile drive is somewhat subdued because all of us are thinking much "and regretting the deserted pride and wreck of sweet Saint Cloud"--as Sir Walter Scott might have expressed it.

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November 9th - continued.

Luncheon done, we head for Windy Hill Manor. A car is just leaving as we drive up before the house, and to our delight Miss Elizabeth is standing on the front steps, speeding the departing guest with gusto, and welcoming us with an artistic sweep of her arm. We descend and pay our colmpliments to the eldest member of this extraordinary and curious trio. Miss Elizabeth is wearing an enormous straw hat, something of a cross between a Panama and a sombrero, but sufficiently distinctive to suit her taste to be different and whatever she dreams is attractive. Her dress is somesort of black lace,--inclined to be rather heavy, with a girdle about her hips of a bright blued and flowered ribbon. Something I imagine from girlhood, although I don't believe little girls ninety years ago wore anthing quite so flamboyant. Her feet are clad in white shoes,--pretty seedy,--but never the less more or white shoes.

She greets us effusively. She holds Aunt Cammie in vast respect on a number of counts, I am sure, but not the least because, as Miss Elizabeth puts it;" You are the Mother of all the artists",--and incidently trying to drag herself under the line, I suspect, even though she is old enogh to be Aunt Cammie's mother.

We step into the house, and I remark upon her unique painting of a cotton plant, each bursting bowl of cotton revealing a nigger babiy's face. Miss Elizabeth holds tight to my hand all this time. I suppose she hasn't been so close to a man since she quit her last dream when we rolled up to the house five minutes before.

Miss Maude's costume was as inconspicuous and plain as Miss Elizabeth's was striking and "arty". Her dress was black. But, she, too,--no doubt in accordance with Elizabeth's well thought out instructions, was wearing a straw hat, and had staged her appearance to make it ~~appear~~ seem as t ough she had just been picking daisies or selecting roses from her Mother's famous garden,--which has long since disappeared. We all exchanged greetings with her, during which Miss Elizabeth began rummaging around in a bunch of papers on the floor and f nally dragged out a mass of papers which she offered us to read individually. They covered her lineage back as far as Charlemagne, she explained, but somehow the time didn't seem ripe for any one to delve into the more intricate branches of the family, and so the thing rather petered out, and Miss Elizabeth was enticed to the famous Chopin piana which might have been hot in 1830 but certainly was no music box today. She concented to render her famous composition of 1929 entitled KILL THE KAISER. It sounded much as it had last year,--only there were a few less keys in working order. But whatever was lost in sound effects was made up by flourishes of the hands and arms on Miss Elizabeth's part. She was also persuaded to render another of her famous compositons which she entitled a Mass. I need not add that it sounded more as though the vowel should have been e.

Mpve,ber 9tj --continued.

After this so-called musical interlude, we began exploring the strange assortment of family heirlooms,--some of great value and mostly of bad 1800 junk,. I had seen all of the former before and enjoyed going over it again, engaging Miss Maude the while, and finding an excuse to stand entranced at her recitation of current misere, while in reality I was enthralled at the two figures talking near by,--Aunt Cammie and Miss Elizabeth. Such a study in contrasts one is not likely to run across often. In this tumbled down old plantation house, cluttered up with precious movables and jim-cracks and housing these three slightly demented sisters, Aunt Cammie stood out like a Goddess of Wholesomeness, done in lovely cream-like Pentellic marble as contrasted with Miss Elizabeth whith whom she talked who seemed like a finely fashioned plaster Madonna tarnished by the years and pitafully ridiqulous. Here were two great ladies of the old South, descendants of all that was best in Mississippi and Louisiana culture and leadership, with generations of successful planters,--and all that that implied in good taste, and this is where the two lines had reached,--Aunt Cammie so kindly, so warm hearted, so capable, so fascinating with Miss Elizabeth, in contrast, so tall, so stately, so silly,--a tyrant, they say to her two half sisters and so scatter-brain, if indeed gray matter may be assumed beyond an extremely limited point.

Somehow Robina had stepped toward the veranda, just in time to put a crimp in the final entrance of Miss Beatrice. Obviously it had been arranged that each sister would simulate entering the house with a straw hat on, as though coming from the garden, and thus avoid opening the door to the left of the hall which once had been a magnificent drawing room but which had now degenerated into a place where all three sisters, lived, ate, cooked and slept. The plan, as originally worked out much have been that each of them would step from their window on the gallery side and so enter the front door, but Robina stepped out onto the gallery just as Miss B. was just stepping there to from her window. Robina later expressed regret to Aunt Cammie and me that this had happened, since it obviously took off some of the shine from their original concept as to how the act would be engineered, but done it was, and everyone tried to ignore the error in timing.

Eventually Miss Elizabeth followed us to the gallery, but before she could go into the garden she must change her shoes,--an point of pprocedure which none of could figure out, but change she did, and devested herself of her strawhat at just the moment it appeared she was going to have a slim excuse to wear it.

We sauntered about the garden in front of the house, Miss Maude serving some homebrew of curious vintage which Robina and I took pains to spill as frequently as possible when non one was looking at us. There was reluctance when I tried to push around to the rear of the house, for everyone knows that it is caving in, but I finally made the grade, and was distressed to see how the

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large "el" which had once been an extension of the entrance hall, running through

Interruption----

I believe we were on the subject of the vast dinning hall at "indy Hill Manor,--of such imposing dimensions that it would seat 300 guests. This is all caving in now. Miss Maude explained that they were demolishing it because they had no need for such extensive halls now. A little later she explained that they were about to undertake the restoration of this part of the house,--as though they had a nickle for such business,--and further pointing out how difficult it was to keep the house intact since every tornado in Mississippi invariably swept over Windy Hill Manor,--"You recall the place is known as 'Windy'", she remarked, as thought to further establish her point that every year "Windy Hill Manor is swept by tornado after tornado". You certainly don't have to be crazy, but it does help out a lot. There was a repetition of last year's foolishness about having decided to employ a staff of gardeners to re-create their Mother's famous gardens, for erly situated half way between the Manor and the main road,--a staff of gardners, and Miss Elizabeth without a suitable dress to go to luncheon in Natchez. Oh, hum.

Time drew near for saying farewell and Miss Elizabeth presented me with a couple of ancient artificfical flowers, entwined about an honest verbina, the odor ofwhich she altered by sprinkling with some vile perfume which she had acquired Heaven knows how. The smell of the stuff nearly made Aunt Cammie sick. Aunt Cammie was also presented with a couple of old whiskey bottles filled with water in which were stuck a couple of slips for her garden. And so we said goodbye,Miss Elizabeth fussing to Robina for fear I would not get around to say goodbye to her personally, but radiant with confused joy when I got around to press her hand in farewell, and sweeping to the ground in an outlandish courtesy in the best,--if out moded manner of another age which had long since departed from this world, except in the hearts and under the crumbling roof of Mesdame Stanton at "indy Hill

Returning to Natchez, we headed South, leaving the city by the road that took us by lovely Dunleigh, its marvelous white colonades resplendant in the fading sunshine, and hence down the traces by Goat Castle and Jenny Merrill's place where she had been murdered a few years back. Finally we struck the fine new cement highway toward Woodville, perfectly paved and graded, through perfectly dumb country side, and I rejoiced that the Modern Age had deserted the fourty mile dirt road to the East of us, for now it would be secure and its side roads to old plantation homes would be immune from the desecration of modern traffic and thus that part of the country would be secure in its seclusion and the further preservation of its ante-bellum mmanner of living. We slept inWoodville.

November 10th.

Up and abroad by seven,--a beautiful cool, radiantly sunshiny day. We breakfasted in Woodville, Remarking much about this quaint little town which some Governmental burea a year ago selected as the most typical of all Southern communities, and then on to discussions of notable plantations in this region,--the Jefferson Davis home, the ruins of the McGee plantation and of another famous place, well known for its amazingCape Jasmines, the owner of which is slightly wacky, and manifests his quirks by painting all the out builds black, occasionally pointing a pistol at a certain visitor whom he delcares he once wanted to make his bride,--fifty years back, etc., etc.

But we shall have to save these visits until our next trip, and so we head south toward the Saint Francisville neighborhood. Being a fine cement highway, I suppose a part of this road at least may not follow the old original one,--this section just below Woodville might be termed the Sanity Belt, merely because the smooth fields on either side suggest a barrenness which hides theold plantation houses with their live-oakas and Spanish moss, which, in the region North of Woodville, almost inevariably brings into being a kind of personality in the inhabitants of the region that suggests, if not defines, a pleasant kind of balminess. A little further along, and the new road must superimpose itself again on the old, for vegitation increases, and Aunt Cammie points out many a plantation road turning from the big road, and names the places and the inhabi tants who live far off at then end of these shaded routes.

A year ago I traveled this road four or five times and never dreamed that there were plantations on either side, hidden away in the woods. Possibly this was because we used to travel at 90 miles an hour but more probably because my inexperience eye at that time was not so expert in detecting insignificant routes which I later learned, if followed, would likely lead on to some architectural jewel of ante-bellum days, some repository of history and romance which was fast fading from this region where so many houses had already fallen into ruins and where so many more tottered on the brink of oblivion.

Secretly each of us wanted to turn off at every side road, I think, but all of us knew that if we were to do so we would become so enchated with our discoveries that we would never get around to any of the several places which we had decided upon to visit, and so no one tempted the others by enunciating his vain hopes. Finally, just above Satin Francisville, wecame to Bains, which is merely a post office with a store on the highway, and possibly a stop in the country on the railroad. We truned east, crossed a railroad track and entered a beautiful wood's road which wound and curved for a mile or so through seemingly virgin growth of vast luxuriance. A little further, and we reached Thompson's Creek which we declined to ford, since Robina had experience difficulties with the sandy bottom there before. And so we left the car, crossed the dry Creek bassin on foot, and follwing the winding road, slowly mounted an incline, fringed with beautiful saplings, bushes, up and up to a point where a group of great live-oaks with beautiful tattered moss promised the approachs to the Cottage.the top of the incline, we turned at right angles. A magnificen alley lead from the gate we had just entered directly to the Cottage

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Nov. 10th, continued -2-

which stood not at the end of the alley, but rather formed the further reaches of the alley on the right., its two story facade, with gallery, half dreaming in the early morning sun which cut slantingly through the trees and further mellowed the soft yellow of this lovely old building. The line of oaks of the left of the alley ran along an embankment which dropped off into a sunken garden and thwnty or thirty feet below ran off into a bayou formed by Thompson's Creek away among th trees

A couple of mocking birds were making a great racket in a magnolia hard by the housein no way disturbing the serenity of the great moss drapped that stood mothionless and transfixed, like giant sentinels guarding La Belle au Bois Dormant. Surely this was a page from Perrault. All my life I had been anticpating something of the sort, but never before had everything contrived to make it so,--the romantic old house, the luxuriance of the trees and flowering bushes, the amplitude of the gardens, the odors of the woodland, the song of the birds. Here a last childhood had caught up with me, I was with friends, I was about to meet new ones and explore their enchanted "cottage".

Miss Louise Butler is the mistress of Cottage Plantation. She is a great lady. As a girl she had been stricken with infantile paralysi It mamed her physically, for one leg has always been much shorter than the other, and I belive one hand was slightly deformed. She has had one obsession for years, too, they say. she is under the impression that she has some throat infection, and accordingly usually greets her friends with a firm handshake while they are still on the ground and she is leaning over the railing on the gallery. This excentricity also makes itself manifest in the dinning room where she always lays an enormously long table for she never joins her guests at the board, but rather occupies a small table at one side where she carries on an animadted conversation during the meal.

Miss Louise's mind is brilliant. Now between sixty and seventy, I suppose, she knows twice as muchas most intellegent people reads much, writes books, composes, and best of all, entertains with exquisite grace. New Orleans, they say, flocks to Miss Louise's place, for like the rest of the world, Miss Louisefranks first in Plantation Society.

It was a little before nine as we approached the front gallery of the Cottage. Save for the mocking birds busy in the magnolia tree, the house and park was still as though the yellow sunbeams sifting through the draperies of the great live-oaks had yet to waken the household from its dreams. Little did we suspect that long before our arrival, Miss Louise had had her coffee on the back gallery and at that moment was busy there with her pen. We sauntered quietly toward the far end of the house, noticing a little farther on the little white building where once Mrs. Audubon had taught school. A darkie came out of the kitchen --farther back of the house, and came to a full halt when Aunt Cammie asked him if he remembered her, Mrs. Henry. He grinened, said "Yaasum" --just like Sam Brown at Melrose,-- and meandered off towa d the house to report to Miss Louise.

By the time he had delivered his message, we had reached the

Nov. 10th--continued

rear of the house, and from the gallery which ran along the back of the house proper and the adjoing "el" we heard a cheery, cultured voice cry:"Why, it can't be Miss Cammie", and we approached the gallery from wh which she leaned to clasp our hands. We chatted for a while there in the early morning sunshine, and then accompanying her, we entered the house. She had called a servant to open all the rooms, and these for the most part ran from front to back gallery with the exception of an occasional small ante room at the rear gallery which, I presume, might have been used as serving pantry, alcove in the next and dressing room next, and so on. We also past through one room facing the rear gallery which housed a pipe organ, then being repaired.

Being intellegent, she knew that we were curious to see the house first, so that we would feel the better at home when it came time for conversation. We accordingly glanced over her rich treasure of china and glassware. I was impressed by the fact that in former days, the dinning room was supplied with three dozen exquisite cut-glass water bottles, so that there might be one at the place of each guest. The great soupiers were elegant, and the vast platers and other pieces that went in to make up the set were a pleasure to glance over. There were splendid examples of Bohemian glass, too, and unqiue examples of rare porcelaines.

Ina another room we saw fine furniture covers of Toile de Jouy, which that morning had been taken from a trunk which had been closed for good in 1844. The fabrics were in perfect condition,--a cream background with a Pompeian flower design of charm anddelicateness. One the house had contained one of the largest libraries on Napoleon in this country, but many of the volumes had been scattered. There were still many volumes on this and other subjects in the house. The great four po ter beds, with their trick mosquito netting were impressive, and the odd bath tubs, concealed in lovely old bureaux, and Sheraton chests of draws were a joy to the eye. Miss Louise was so good to let us handle and feel of these treasures, whether we were balancing old silver between our fingers or pulling out these strange little bath tubs.

Eventually we found our way into a lovely big drawing room, tastefully furnished in ante-bellum treasures. In a corner stood an friendly old piano on which Miss Louise played for us from a musical p comedy she was now composing. The music was charming and somehow I felt that itembraced a flavor of those long deprted days when the plantation was the great, luxuriant feudal home of the planter family, the endless stream of guests and the hosts of well looked after darkies. Mellowness must have always prevaded at the Cottage, and Miss Louise's music was mellow and goldenwith a vague suggestion of old and well remembered tunes running through it in a sub-conscous and half forgotten way.

But now conversation was in order, and knowing that Miss Louise and Aunt Cammie would have many things to run over by themselves, Robina asked Miss Louise if we might explore the second floor by ourselves. Of course she readily acquiesed, merely requesting that we refrain from opening only one door,--one at the extreeme end of the house.

And so, up an inside staircase we flew, reaching the top at the front center of the second floor, with as enchanting a little narrow

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little hall as I have ever seen. It ran along from right to left of the staircase landing,--the entire length of the house. As the roof slats on this side of the house, the hall itself had a slant-ceiling. and was lighted here and there by little dormer windows.

From this passageway both to the left and to the right of the staircase, were a series of doors opening into room, and most of these rooms in turn had other doors, so that each could be entered from the hall, or the hall doors could be closed, and one might communicate with the other rooms without going out into the hall, thus enabling one to occupy them singly or as a complete apartment as one might choose. There were not so many treasures in these rooms, but even so, there were items which would make glad the heart of any collector,--a splendid clover-leaf four-poster bed, little tables that were exquisite, ruby glass that exceed the value of the gold up in it to make it glow, and three of the loveliest little preserve jars that were ever imported from France in old Plantation days. They were possibly four or five inches high, perfectly straight, and with a whiteness of porcelaine that seemed twice as much by the delicious single decoration on each. As I recall, there were two that had a single bunch of red currents with a green leaf in the center, while the other was a single red cherry with a green leaf. I should love to have one of these lovely cylindrical jars. Somehow they appealed to me more than any other treasure I had ever run across in any museum.dno't know if the slanting ceilings reminded me of the slanting ceilings of my little home in Greenwich Village, but I could easily picture living in these cosy apartments for the rest of my life,--and loving it. It would be so heavenly to gaze out of the dormers at the great gauze draperies on the live-oaks on a moon-lit summer's night, and it would be so pleasant to sit before one of the glowing fire-places in December, drinking black coffee and wading through some old forgotten Louisiana plantation diary with someone who loved this kind of life, too.....

But we had played around up here long enough, and so reluctantly we closed all the doors and went back down stairs.

Aunt Cammie wanted me to see the great azelia in the formal garden at one end of the house, and thither we wandered, and so to the rear of the house where we joined Mr. Bob, Miss Louise's brother who showed us the great sunken garden at the other end of the house, pointing out the conservatories that we being repaired, the quince trees, pear and fig trees, and withal making me wish I knew something about horticulture.

Back to the front gallery with Aunt Cammie, who left me ther to talk with Miss Louise while she made a tour of the garden before the house that descended abruptly beyond the great oak trees and away toward the bayou. Miss Louise spoke of literature, her interest in 18th century French writers which she read in their original and of famous royal parks in France which she knew so well although she had never visited them. After a time Aunt Cammie returned , and we both realized that me must say goodbye. There were darkies in the yard

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and Aunt Cammie called to them:

"Now remember, you all take good care of Miss Louise and Mr. Bob until I come back again."

"Yaassum" came back the chorus of he soft southern drawl.

"And mind you", continued Aunt Cammie, "Don't you go away to the city. You know well enough there aint nobody happy when they go away from the plantation."

"Yassum, ', came back the velvet chorus,"Aint nobody happy out dere".

A final wave to Miss Louise, and trhought eh picket gate, down the winding road and across Thompsons Creek where Audubon and Brother Bob were waiting. A final Au revoir to him, and we were headed toward Saint Francisville.

We passed by Afton Villa without stopping to view the lovely gardens or the repulsive carpentry -Gothic house. Aunt Cammie had a fund of stories about the place and its history. Sometime after the Confederate War a Miss Howard, I believe, established a girl's finishing school in the Villa. It seems that Miss Louise and a relative of Aunt Cammie,--I thought she said an aunt, but possibly it was a cousin went to school there together.. After coffee at Saint Francisville, we headed for Oakley,--two miles on the big road and a miles or so on gravel. A dirt road leads from the gravel through the wooded park which seems pretty heavily overgrown so that many of the fine oaks loos much of their real value.

Entering the garden gate, we find it badly neglected about the gardens with also is suffering from too much overgorwth. Finally we reach the house which is unfortunate in its porportions, seeming rather too high for its width. Aunt Cammie is greeted by old Miss mathews who lives there alone with a brood of dogs, now that her sister Ida has gone. Miss Mathews retires to her living quarters on the ground floor, once the butlers, no doubt, and we mount the high flight of steps to the gallery. There is something about the house that reminds me of Savanah,--somehow it is more seaboard than Delta

and accordingly something of an incongruity. But the birds are singing gayly in the unkempt garden below, and Aunt Cammie and Robina recall that Audubon lived here for ahile, and ~~taught~~ and taught the lovely daughter of the family. Drawing and dancing formed the majors in the cirriculum, but an unusual dairy nearby formed an outlet for his versitility, for his pupil at Oakley were joined by other damsels in the neighborhood, and the great painter o f birds taught thess heiresses of the local gentry in the finer points of swimming.

Our speculations regarding these doings, however, were cut short when little Miss Mathews opened the doors leading onto the gallery.

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A colorless woman in her late sixties or possibly seventies, little Miss Mathews was attired is a neat plain black dress which was a perfect counter-part to her simple personality. Aunt Tammie said she would sit with her on the gallery while Robina and I explored the drawing room and parlor. It didn't take us long. There wee many portaits of little interest and no value, and a strange assortment of bad Victorian pieces. The great parlor was notable for its old lace curtains and its wall paper,--dating no doubt from the 1880's or 1890's. The idea of the design was sickly Moorish, with the full impact hatching at the ceiling which was so papered as go give the impression that the thing was set in square tiles. I was enchanted to duck out of the place before one of these imaginary bits of plaster should become a reality and drop on my head. We deicded that we must cut our visit short, and as we left I bemoaned the fact that poor little Miss Mathews even lacked the balminess of the "indy Hill Manor belles as an excuse for lending something by way of diversion since there was little or nothing to interest one.

And so back to St. Francisville, and out a couple of miles to Rosedown. The two silly women who live there seem to have alienated loads of visitors who have been there before me. They have even in succeeded in annoying me in times gone by eventhough I never before have had a chance to speak with them, although they have yelled at me.

We stopped before the big white gate of Rosedown, and found that the two old maids who had inherited the property had contrived to insult society in general and Southern hospitality in particular by nailing up a sign reading: DO NOT ENTER UNLESS PREPARED TO SEPND FIFTY CENTS. "Well, aint they a sight." was Aunt Tammie's cryptic remark, and we passed through the gate on foot.

In view of the tarts who now occupy Rosedown, one rather hates to admit it, but there is no denying that their ancestors actually did create one of the loveliest places in the Saint Francisville region. A beautfful alley of live-oaks, possibly a quarter of a mile in length, leads straight from the gate to the shimmering columns of the house. Early in the nineteenth century the house was beautifully appointed and the gardens were laid out by a well-know French landscape artist who did a magnificent job. On either side of the alley, and alternating with the great oaks, statues in creamy marble were placed, each in classical design to represent the seasons and the continents. On beyond the oaks and statues are a straight single path, banked by great hedges that wall in the formal gardens behind them. The classicism of the design suggests the layout of the Tapis Vert at Versailles, while the luxuriance of the foliage and the tunnel formed by the interlocking branches over the main drive gives the whole creation an opulent Louisiana flavor that at once mellows and softens the hole atmosphere of this lovely place.

We mounted the short flight of steps and crossing the veranda, kocked at the door. Shortly the elder of the two old maids opened to us and greeted Aunt Tammie effusively, for they had known each other a long time. She ushered us into the finely porportioned hall, circular in form, with a heavenly staircase that circled half way around

November 10th,--continued

In this entrance hall there are doors to right and left leading to drawing rooms, and a door directly opposite the entrance, leading to the dinning room. To the right of this latter door, and occupying the curve directly balancing the staircase stands a beautiful, life-size statue of the Venus de Medecis in white marble, seemingly shocked at the offensive gaudy wall paper that ran in a streaming design from floor to ceiling. Covertly I remarked to Robina that this busy design could never have been selected by the builders for such a lovely room. Miss Bauman, our hostess, remarked shortly afterward that this room, of course, carried the original wall paper. But Robina's quick eye had detected splotches along the stairs where the paper had worn thin or had been torn off, revealing beneath a beautiful shae of blue,--obviously just the perfect color to give the proper value to the gracefully sweeping staircase and the snowy marble figure. Both Robina and I gasped a little at Miss Bauman's assertion, but not to be downed, Robina pointed out the blue color, but Miss Bauman,--or possibly Bowman, was adamant. To counter, I merely bowed in silence, but Robina acquiesed by saying how odd it was, for this really must be double faced wall paper, the like of which she had never imagined. "Yess", Miss Bowman, delighted to find a new talking point with which to regale future visitors,"Yes, this was double-faced wall paper".--The old fraud.

We passed into the drawing room at the right,--a beautifully porportioned room, with as fine black marble mantle pieces as I have seen in this region, white walls, generous glass-cased mahogny book shelves, mirrors of splendid workmanship, and considerable handcarved rosewood chairs, divans and whatnot, together with an accumulation ofjim-cracks and sea-shells, reminiscent of Windy Hill Manor, but withal different in that this house seemed immaculately clean.

An equally fine proportioned room lay just behind this room,--probably a intimate reception room of the original builder,--and likewise embellished with a handsome black marble mantle, fine portraits and substantial mahogny bookcases flanking the fireplace. Returning to the first drawing room, we continued further away from the entrance toward another room, containing the same lovely accoutrements, and quantities of books, both in the glass cased Mahogny cases and piled high on the tables. The top volume was from the American edition of Audubon, early in the 19th century. We inquired about the well-known Rosedown Elephant Edition, which everyone used to be shownwhen the girls spoke of the time Audubon lived here. But Miss Bowman said they had never had such an edition. This of course is an untruth, because many people have seen it and Lyle had turned through it many a time when her used to visit the house when the girls Uncle was still living with them. They had obviously sold this item and didn't want to admit it.

Miss Bowman, No. 2, appeared shortly, and seemed to be enchanted to see Aunt Tammie. Robina and I accordingly barged about the place, and Miss Bowman, No. 1, joined us. Later we learned that during these separate conversations, Aunt Tammie had made inquiry regarding the four-poster bed with the mirror in the tester while Robina was referring about it to the sister. Several years ago Lyle had been in the bed room and seen the item. , the only one of its kind that anybody had ever he rd of. He mentioned it in his

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Nov. 10th -continued.

OLD LOUISIANA. According to the historical tale, a fine bedroom furniture collection was made when Henry Caly was running for the Presidency, and was to be presented to him in the White House when he was elected. Aside from the great beauty of the wood and the design the tester contained a mirror which reflected the bed below the tester As Lyle once remarked, "I haven't any idea why anyone would want to wake up in the morning only to find himself looking him in the eye as he lay prostrate,--and doubtlessly slightly warn, as would be portrayed by the mirror stationed immediately above him".

Be that as it may, the bed was so contrived, but as everyone knows, Mr. Clay never did quite make the White House, and the furniture was accordingly purchased by the owner of Rosedown.

Both of the Bowman girls swore that no such bed ever existed, which is a big story, of course, since Lyle and others had seen it when the girls were living in the house with their old Uncle or Father or somebody of ancient vintage. We accordingly assume, that along with the Elephant Audubon, the girls have quietly disposed of these treasures and are of such a mind as not to admit they ever possessed them. As I recall, the same might be said about an embroidered screen which has also disappeared.

Some of the protraits in the house are good, although not especially exciting. One in the dinning room was pointed out as being especially interesting,--their grandmother as painted by Audubon. It's a pleasant portrait, but Audubon never had a finger in the pie or I'm a chinaman.

We stepped out onto the portico running across the West end of the house. The flutted columns are pleasing and show evidence of having had repair. Possibly the mirrored bed wasn't sold in vain. In the mean time Aunt Cammie had paid the elder Miss Bowman our $1.50 which we had entered prepaired to spend. Miss Bowman proffered her reluctance to accept it, but her insistance was not so great that she failed to still have it in her pocket when we said good by on the front gallery. Imagine such business, after having known Aunt Cammie all these years.....

We explored the garden directly below the west portico of the house. Obviously it had once been a fine labarynth, for the yew hedges still indicated certain turns and twists, even though they were pretty badly bushed in sections. Roses and other flowering bushes showed up bravely in the tangle to which the whole garden was fast heading.

We returned to the alley immediately in front of the house, and explored the formal garden on the right hand side of the alley, and running all the way from the house to the gate. It had been so neglected I couldn't make much out of it, but probably could if I had a little time to wander about in it, as it is quite vast. We returned to the garden on the xxxxxx on the left hand side of the alley between the house and the gate. It is equally extensice, and originally must have enjoyed an informal planting not unlike the famous Queen's Garden at Versailles, famous ~~fax~~ as the spot where the Diamond Necklace hoax was perpetrated on Cardinal Rohan. In this garden, some of the old winding paths were noticable and great

trees and stumps of those which had disappeared, still marked an uncertain design which could also probably be unravelled if I had the time to do so. The Bowmans had said that a French gardner,--his name as they rattled it off sounded like Comte de Lovelle,-had laid out these gardens. They must have been splendid when they were completed,--about 1840, I suppose, but the mad growth of azalias, roses and Heaven knows what, makes it pretty difficult to make much sense out of the place unless one were to take several hours to follow out the paths and try to piece togeher what ever remenants may still be found. Somehow, as we drove away from Rosedown, I was thankful that the house was being kept intact, but as I thought of the garden, I couldn't helf but think that a grave that has crumbled and slipped into a bayou isn't ~~xxxxx~~ half so disturbing as one that is poised on the edge.

We lunched at St. Francisville where Christian and I had lunched so joyously a year ago. On leaving, we found that we had a good half hour before it was time to take the Ferry for the West side of the Mississippi. We accordingly visited the quaint old church and beautifully planted graveyard,--its splendid old, most-draped oaks making it one of the loveliest I have ever known. . Surely Savanah's Buena Venture cemetary is more vast, and sweetly sad, but somehow St. Francisville more limited in his ironed fenced demarkations, is less endless and therefore morelovable. Dante might easily have started His tremendous masterpiece in the old Georgian plantation that had metomorp osed into a cemetary, but it would be at St.Francisville that Gray might have penned his Elegy. Aunt Cammie knew loads of families that were represented in the inscriptions,--Bowmans and Barrows without end., and all the great of the region in those fabulous days before 1861. I was impressed by a large tomb bearing the name of IRA SMITH. There was somet ing about the general line of the tomb that suggested Egyptian architecture. The sun was shining pretty brightly and I couldn't see the decoration very clearly, but just above the strongly raised name on the tomb was an insignia, seeming to be surprisingly Egypto-American. There was the round disk, of old Egypt, and on either side the wing and head of a bird, which if I am not mistaken, were distinctly American eagle. The effect was extraordinary I must explore this monument again under better light conditions.

One fact that was noticable was the absence from most of the tombstones of the many gingles that appear on so many tombstones in the New England region. The usual St. Francisville inscription carried merely the name with dates of birth and death. One stone, I recall, merely gave the family name,--for example Jones,--and under it merely the initials of the several members of the family, such as A.D. -- E.W --N.H. -- E.F --F.M.

But the stone which intrigues me the most was of a name that I do not recall, nor the exact dates, but with the final date was noted this particular: Died, 1852, at Ambrosia in West Feliciana. DIED IN AMBROSIA IN WEST FELICIANA. Somehow that has a value for me that is akin to Robina's famous line to Aunt Cammie,---"By now, I suppose, the little colored boys are in the fig trees". That line unrolled all the French impressionist school before my eyes. DIED IN AMBROSIA IN WEST FELICIANA somehow

Mary

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marvelously distills the fabulous old South like a wonderfully preserved peach, shimmering in a succulent golden liquid and made doubly lustrous by the gleaming glass jar in which it is sealed.

We crossed the Mississippi at 3 o'clock, and headed north, turning before we reached New Roads. Many of the old plantation houses through this section have either disappeared, or are located on the river road to our left,--such as Labatue, or on the other road along Fabre River, such as Parlange, that we saw few evidences of the ante-bellum civilization. On stopping at a garage for gas, however, it was interesting to hear a couple of mechanics speaking Cajun French They were discussing the advisability of taking a radiator down the road to another place to have it soldered,--not a particularly fascinating subject, in itself, but as a game for the listener, it was entertaining to see how many of the expressions they used were in tinged with phrases foreign and incomprehensible to my ear.

Passing through several towns, --and a drove of donkeys going in the same direction as we at Marksville, we slowed down only to try to open the phalanx of the heard, which was rather difficult, the creatures being so muleish about giving an inch. Great plains of sugar cane swept away to the horizon on either side of the road, and through these great seas of gray green we hurried, hoping to reach Meekers before nightfall for Robina had been promised an opportunity to see a sugar house in operation on this trip,--in fact this trip was primarily designed around this point. We did reach Meekers, and although it was after dark, the mill was going full blast as these mills do at this busy season. But something went wrong in our plans, for there was some lack of harmony, apparantly, between the man to whom we had been directed,--a representative chemist of the planters, and it seemed that he would not care to take us through the mill from which visitors are barred without the permission of the mill forman, who at that moment was not in evidence. After some reflection, we accordingly decided to forego an inspection of how the sugar was ground and granulated, agreeing that we would try another later under more favorable auspices. I am sure it was a disappointment to all of us, but Robina most especially, for she and Aunt Cammie had planned on such a visit for a long time. But we bore up as well as we could, and I must say that Robina took her disappointment like a good soldier that she is.

We dined in Alexandria and headed toward home in a rain. , reaching Melrose about 10:30,--"and so to bed".

November 12th --Sunday.

A gray day with occasional sprinkles. An early breakfast, and a few notes on my November 8th Journal. Robina came over around nine, and we had a good chat, with coffee coming at ten at which time Aunt Cammie joined us.

After some little conversation, Aunt Cammie started to read to us, but was called to the telephone by Lyle from New Orleans, saying that Alexander Woolcott would arrive here at three this afternoon..

Sister and her husband came with the baby before dinner and afterward Robina parked in Lyle's cabin, tending fires for a spell.

Mr. Woolcott arrived with Mr. Henessy in the late afternoon, bringing along his huge black French poodle which proved a marvelous playmate in the midst of the living room for little Heinzie, the Henry daxhund.

At dinner, Mr. Woolcoot was fascinating, as was to be expected. He has recently been making a film with the Dionne quintuplets of whom he had many fabulous stories to relate. He attributed their survival of the first two months,--the five weighed ten poounds altogether when born,--to their excellent nurse, a Miss Larue, and to the good sense of Dr. Dafoe,--whose family before the American Revolution carried the name of Devose, and lived in New York as loyal British subjects, and were accordingly forced to go to Canada after the Revolution was over,--and also he set high store on Dr. Dafoe's brother of Toronto, who seems to be a gorgeous person and of all things, one of the greatest child specialists in the world. A. W. also spoke amusingly of the considerable amount of fan mail Papa Dionne receives,--for the most part from unhappy married women who haven't for some reason or other been able to beget an offspring.

After dinner we spent a pleasant three hours in the library. Uncle Tom's Cabin came up for discussion, and Aunt Cammie showed us the stencil of Robert McAlpin which he used in marking his bails of cotton. Mr. McAlpin was the Simon Legree of UNCLE TOMS CABIN and was related to Harriet Beecher Stowe, whom she visited for material on her famous novel.

I had expected that A. W. would manifest more interest in Uncle Tom, although he did come through with a story on Mrs. Stowe. It seems that Mrs. Stowe after the War, spent some time in England as guest of Lady Byron. Later, on her return to America, Mrs. stowe spoke of this visit in a magazine article, remarking that Lord Byron had had a child by his sister. England rocked with fury at this report, calling Madam Stowe a fraud, but a little latter, Lord Byron wife confirmed this story, and to prove it, produced the child of her Brother and his sister, whom Lady Bryon had adopted,--that is the child.

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Here's a story that somehow throws a sidelight on Aunt Cammie. A few years ago she heard that there were plenty of aigrettes making their home in a lake back in the woods somewhere not far from here. The birds were sufficiently plentiful that the colored folk were catching them for their pots when chicken was scarce. The idea that aigrettes were living in the neighborhood was enough to start Aunt Cammie off, and so she started out with ~~xx~~ her young daughter, Irma Sompeyrac, her husband and another person or two.

Reaching the lake, the whole party climbed into a boat, bent on locating the aigrettes, and incidentally observing alligators with which the lake was well stocked. Before going far, however, the boat sank, thanks to the antics of Mr. Willard. Fortunately the water was only about up to the knees of the grown people, but it was deep enough to soak the younger people thoroughly and set them to screaming in fear of meandering alligators. But Aunt Cammie took the situation in her stride, calmed the children and wading to shore succeeded in getting the others to dry land. It goes without saying that the search for aigrettes was finished at this point, but finding herself where she did, Aunt Cammie thought it an excellent opportunity to see how the habitat of the alligators might appear, and if there were any eggs to be found. She was warned that during the hatching period the Mother alligator usually keeps watch of her nest, and is likely to attack anyone who might approach the nest. But the excentricities of an alligator meant little to Aunt Cammie, and so she gave one of the men a stick as a cudgel, and began stirring around in the decayed trunks of mouldering trees in search of nests, and finding one, gathered up several dozen of the eggs to take home to hatch.

Before reaching the car, they stumbled across a small alligator, two or three feet long, and so he was put on the running board and transported to Melrose.

Arring home, the alligator, which seemed to be in a trance, was placed in a deserted chicken coop, while the family dined. After dinner, they went out to see how the alligator was getting along, and ofcourse found that he had not only come to life but had walked off.

The children complained bitterly that Aunt Cammie had ruined swimming in Cane River which was then dammed at opposite ends, forming a narrow winding lake, and sure enough the darkies were not long in reporting that an alligator was in Cane River, and as time marched on he grew by leaps and bounds. I don't recall what, if anything, ever happened to the unhatched alligator eggs, or what ever became of the Cane River inhabitant. Sufficient it is to cite this tale as a side-light on the personality of Aunt Cammie.

November 12th -continued.

Another story that struck me as amusing was concerning a certain Sloane family who had grown rich druing the last half of the 19th century and bult themselves an enormous house in New England somewhere. As a high point in their social career, they invited President and Mrs. McKinley to visit them there. A grand dinner was arranged, with much decorations, including a huge silver eagle which was suspended high up on the wall of the dinning room. Although never well, Mrs. Mckinley always accompanined her husband on public or private occasions of this type. The dinner hour arrived, as did Mr. and Mrs. McKinley, and as the guests were about to be seated about the board, the orchestra struck up the National Antem, and in accordance with pre-arranged plans, the eagle in silver unexpectedly to the uninitiated, flapped his wings metallically. Everyone present was startled at the banging, but it was too much for Mrs. McKinley who fell into an epilectic fit.

There was a line of talk about people who want to have babies who want babies by geniuses, including Rebecca West who had one by H. G. Wells,--a youth now and married, with some ability to write and paint. A letter from Rebecca to A. W. this week advised that her son has just been rejected by the British Army because of a weak heart, and he and his wife have accordingly adopted six children from London,--orphans who have been with those forced to gow to the country while the war lasts.

Somehow Father Divine's name came up in connection with large houses. A. ". said that while driving with Mr Roosevelt at Hyde Park a few weeks back, they had remarked that Father Divine owned a "Heaven" just across the river from the Roosevelt place. Mr. A. ". remarked to the President that such a circumstance was somewhat curious,--that is to say that on one side of the Hudson is F. D. while on the other is F. D. R.

At nine, Mr. A. ". and Henessy retired to Lyle's cabin, CammieJr. her husband and child departed, Aunt Camie and Robina flew upstairs while I came to my little house to jot this down,--and fold up my beard,--which Ido now.

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November 13th Monday.

Up birght and early, and delighted to see the sun after yesterday's rain. I had promised Robina I would ride with her to Nachitoches to see the Dentist when she left Melrose to head toward Shreveport. With a slight cold in my teeth, I had decided not to see the dentist, but I thought the ride would do me good, and I knew I would enjoy a good chat with Robina, too.

Returned to Melrose about noon and did some mail after dinner and worked on my neglected Journal which I had neglected during the past week.

I had hoped to do some work with Aunt Cammie in the afternoon, too, but when I saw Frank arrive with a coffee tray with only one cup and saucer, I knew that the work would have to be passed up for another day. Later I learned that visitors had come to see Aunt Cammie, and before they left I heard them as they passed by my maisonette, inspecting the flowers and admiring the lay-out of Melrose

It always hands me a big laugh when Aunt Cammie expatiates upon the majority of these people who come to call on her, for most of them come primarily out of curiosity, either because they want to see Melrose or because they are curious to meet her,--or sometimes, although rarely,--both. "If they would only keep on playing cards," says Aunt Cammie. "Honestly, Darlin' ,I haven't anything I can give them, and they certainly are wasting my time. But"--and then relentingly, "we all have a lot of things we have to do, I suppose, and we simply must do it without complaining, and I suppose that is one of the things that is expected of me, although I never have time to do half I want to,--and after such visits I'm good for nothing".

And what with the correspondence, the bookbinding, the weaving, the historical research, making the gardeners jump crooked, supervising the household, fussing with Ramie, etc., etc., her complaints against those who have time for card-playing, in so far as they come to her for diversion, does seem justified.

Her's a story that somehow throuws a sidelight on Aunt Cammie. A few years ago she heard that there were plenty of aigrettes making their homes in a lake back in the woods somewhere not far from here. The birds were sufficiently plentiful that the colored folk were catching them for their pots when chicken was scarce. The idea that aigrettes were living in the neighborhood was enough to start aunt Cammie off, and so she started out with her young daugh er, Irma Semperac, her hus and and another person or two.

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Nov. 12th, -continued

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Before reaching the car, they stumbled across a small alligator two or three feet long, and so he was put on the running board and transported to Melrose.

Arriving home, the alligator, which seemed to be in a trance, was placed in a deserted chicken-coop, while the family dined. After dinner, they went out to see how the alligator was getting along, and of course found that he had not only come to life but had walked off.

The children complained bitterly that Aunt Cammie had ruined swimming in Cain River which was then damned at opposite ends, forming a narrow winding lake, and sure enough the darkies were not long in reporting that an alligator was in Cain River, and as time marched on, he grew by leaps and bounds. I don't recall what if anything ever happened to the unhatched alligator eggs, or what ever became of the Cain River inhabitant. Sufficient it is to cite this tale as a side-light on the personality of Aunt Cammie.

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Nov. 14th - Tuesday.

Up early and worked on my Journal and dashed off some mail.

At dinner the question of a nuew cook came up. The daughter of the woman who presided over the kitchen before Clemence and Rita had to fill in, was someone who lives in a nearby cabin who has recently lost her daughter. She has carried on so high, what with wailing and all, that she says she isn't able to cook at the moment. But Aunt Cammie says that her household must go on, and when told by one of thex servants that the cook said she couldn't live in her cabin anymore because of the memory of her offspring, Aunt Cammie said: "Well, aint she a sight. What do you folks think we'd all do if we all had to change houses everytime somebody died. We'd be livin' ing the road,--all of us -- if we did such foolishness". But Aunt Cammie had given the woman a few more days of grace to make up her mind, but that, if any, seems to be laggard, to say the least. And so was a new cook to be acquired.

Mr. J. M. said there was a woman in the store at dinner time who said she wanted the job, and he had come to ask Aunt Cammie if she wanted to talk to her. Aunt Cammie did, and so she was brought to the house for the interview. I was glad to assist as a sitter-in, since I hadn't seen Aunt Cammie operate in this field before.

Frank, Aunt Cammie's "straw boos" and prize houseman, brought the woman in. Aunt Cammie greeted by saying "Good evenin'" which impressed me, since I had always though of evening as after four or five o'clock and it was now a little after one. The woman said "Good evenin'.

"You live near by?"

"Yessum, across, --pointing, across the river there".

"How do you really want the job as cook for me" was the next question, to which an affirmative reply was forthcoming,"because, Aunt Cammie"continued," I don't want anybody to work here who doesn't want to. I know the people who work here and I like them and I want them to want to work here or not work here at all". The woman wanted to work here.

Then Aunt Cammie asked her name,--and the answer was "Elma Mo athi thing Davis". It seemed that she lived in a house by herself across the river with her three children. Before she had arrived, Aunt Cammie had told me that sometime a go, her husband had killed a white man,--something which just can't happen in Louisiana, and had fled and would never come back. Aunt Cammie said that as she understood the affair, a deputy in the saloon had needlessly provoked the negro, and to everyone's astonishment, the negro had drawn a gun and killed the deputy,--and fled. And Aunt Cammie said she thought the deputy had got about what was coming to him. So here was the negro's wife, who had been living on the other bak of the river, with her three children, and now she was about to join the Melrose staff.

Next Aunt Cammie asked her about her health and she said it was good, that she was never sick. She volonteer, too, that the children had been well-trained and that they were able to "grow up by themselves. I am under the impression that one of them is six, but I can't say if that one is the oldest or youngest. . So far, so good.

Next, --could she cook. The woman surprised me by saying frankly that she never had been a cook. Heaven know, anywhere else in the world the woman would have sworn she was an expert. But Elma said she never had.

I was as much surprised by Aunt Cammie's response:"Well, that's alright. I know you can learn, and I'll teach you. There's only this one condition,--you must always be honest."

The woman assured herm that she was honest, and I must say I believed her.

And so now she was hired, and there must bex the question of where she would live. Aunt Cammie said that there was a house where the other cook had lived and that she could have that. Everything under the house must be raked out and burned, and the house must be thoroughly cleaned and whitewashed inside before she moved in. And did she have any --something -which I didn't underst nd, but whie must have been livestock or something of the kind, for the woman said she had several hens, some guinnies and some pigs., but now that she had a job she wouldn't need so many. Aunt Cammie suggested that she sell all of them but left that up to her to decide. Aunt Cammie also said that she would be glad to buy some of her stock from her if she didn't have anyone else to sell them to.

Later, J. M. came in, and when told that she had stock, he said she could bring it all with her if she wished to, but Aunt Cammie again urged her to sell most of it before she moved over to her new home. After she had gone, Aunt Cammie said to me with a grin: "Now ain't J. M. a sight, telling that woman she can bring her chickens and guinnies over to this side of the river with her. He knows perfectly well that them niggers will pick her chicken-coop clean if she brings them with her".

And so Elma was told that the cabin would be cleaned for her and that someone would be sent to transport her things for her, and that she would come to work, if she wanted to, two days hence. All that was satisfactory to everyone, it seemed, but after she had gone, Aunt Cammie said with a laught,"Well, Carlin', we've got a new cook, but let me tell you one thing, we wont have her startin' in a couple of days, because I am sure that neither she nor I thought of it at the moement, but two days hence is Friday, and no nigger ever started any new job on that day."

I was curious to know if the ngeroes really did steal from each other and learned that they certainly did. Sam Brown told the Madam that he always hauled huge trunks of trees to his house for firewood, because, in splitting it only as he needed it, he was always sure that "dem niggers" couldn't run away with it. I made some stupid observation regarding this robbery tendency to which Aunt Cammie replied: "Well, what can you expect of those colored folks when Dr. Smith of Louisiana State University is sent to prison on a 24 year term for doing just exactly the same thing".

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And speaking of Dr. Smithbrings to mind a story I heard while in St. Francisville. It seems that Dr. and Mrs. Smith asked to be received by Miss Louise Butler at the Cottage. Mrs. Smith, who is reported to be he devil in the piece, wanted to see Miss Louise's gold nives forks and spoons.

Miss Louise either to acceed to some request of Mrs. Smith, or for some other reason, left the room for a moment in search of some treasure that was being discussed at the moment, and when she returned, one set of the gold service had disappeared.

Following up the sotry of negroes' ability to acquire what they need or what their simple fancies may crave, Aunt Sammie said that one never needs consider anytning in Melrose or the cabins apprx housing guests, although in the matter of fire wood or pears or the like, one may be sure that they carry off plenty. Once she asked Regis, one of her gardners, if they hadn't been stealing fruit from one of her trees.

"Yaassum", he responded straight-forwardly,"Dey shu 'nf done steal dat fruit. I see 'em when de's up in de tree."

"And you stood there like an ninny and let 'em steal without sayin' a word," she laughed and waved him away to some other task.

I asked about this point in not reporting the culprits, and she explained that they are afraid of their own color, fearing that if one of them should take a dislike to another who might cross him, because it is likely enough the evil one might put a curse on the innocent one, so that the latter might make up some morning crippled. For at heart it would appear that voodoo is still at the bottom of much of theirbehavior and some people say that the church doesn't do much by way of correcting these beliefs,--assuming that such a correction were possible. Others tell me that the local convents hereabout carry on educational work,--one school near Pere Augustin s church, teaching three hundred students, but they do say that about all the children learn is to say their prayers, and that compitence on the part of the nuns who are teaching and ability and desire on the part of the pupils might both be investigated to advantage. It is certainly apalling that of all the colored people I know about these parts, only one of them can read. Aunt Sammie s houseman and I get quite a kick out of one thing we have in common; for neither of us can read a line.

There were a couple of guests in the afternoon,--some woman from Dallas and another from someplace else from the same general locality Aunt Sammie and I didn t get very far with our cataloguing, but in the evening we did have grand conversation before my blazing hearth, made up primarily of faseinating stories of life at Shaddy Lawn or Shaddy Grove, where her mother lived as a child before the war.

November 15 or 16th - misplaced my calendar.

Awoke about dawn this morning,--around six o'clock, I suppose. I was delicious just to lie in bed and watch the eastern sky smooth out from deep oyster gray to poreelain pink as I lay in bed andsurvey the Universe through by beloved Louis XIV window.

It was one of those pleasnt hours of the day when it is just enough to be alive without thinking of yesterday's happenings or anticipating today's,--or even bothering to think at all,--just as though one were living in reverse that delicious moment at bedtime, when for a second one poises on the brink between consciousness and sleep, and fdor a little segment of a second knows thatpeace has settled down and oblivion is assured.

But I was glad to hear Frank at my door, and it was rest one elbow on my pillow and sip my coffee as he expertly laid my fire which in a twinkling was all aglow.

I leaped through my shave and shower, and before I had finished brushing my hair, Frank had returned with my breakfast on a huge tray. I smiled to myself as I though of my breakfast in New York,--usually bread and milk and coffee. Here it is usually a full grapefruit, bacon and egg and more bacon, toast, preserved figs, a glass f milk and sometimes cottage cheese,--home made, of course, and a pot of coffee.

A couple of the dogs usually arrive on the gallery with Frank,--the big, clumsy German shepard or Police dog and Snow. Sometimes they come in and sit before the fire while I eat, although the big dog is so silly that he usually gets to wagging his tail so hard that he upsetts everything that isn't nailed down. Later in the day Hansie or Weinzie arrives. He is a sweet little daxhund who usually stays with Aunt Sammie all night, and according to report always howls madly all night when she is away from ho e.

Uncle Whitefoot,--so named by the darkies, is an affectionate gray and whitefooted cat who usually stays with me, and makes a nice companion, not only for me, but lso for the dogs in the morning during breakfast. Sometimes Monstrosity stays with me, but never the tow of them together, for they don't seem to be friends, although they look much alike. Mrs. Huey P. Long seldom gets over for breakfast, although Burwind, Monstrosities diminutive mother gets over with the dogs. Its quite a happy little family, altogether.

Aunt Sammie came over for mid-morning coffee. We did some letters about Ramie to University of Louisiana and to a man in lower Louisiana who has done much with this oriental grass which is being used limitedl y for weaving. Aunt Sammie has raised it in her garden,--I believe the plant came from Egypt originally, and recently has been imported from China, I think. Anyway, Aunt Sammie has had some of the material uspun by women on the place and has also woven cloth on her own loom. We shall plumb this developement further, and shall send some of that grown at Melrose to Dupont for suggestions on how to remove the "glue" from it before the spinning is done.

I had hoped that we might do some more correspondence in the

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afternoon but when my coffee arrived with a single cup on the tray I knew that that hope was not to be realized. Of course, morexpxxxpx people to see the Mistress of Melrose, and I discovered later, as I had thought, that they would have made themselves and their hostess much happier if they had staid wherever they started from, kept on playing cards and left us alone.

I worked a bit straighening my no ebooks, and in the evening, Aunt Cammie came to my house and we worked on index and ser pbook details. I lis ened to the radio for a little while, looked at pictures and so to bed.

Nov. 16th - Thursday.

Warm but cloudy, with occasional drops of rain. In the morning Aunt Cammie visited me, reading for a while from her grandfather's diary.

I found the diary good. Each day was divided into sections, with an account of the weather, inevitably followed by some observation of local doings, such as the names of visitors, the coming and going of steamers of Bayou Lafourche, price of various commoditie and finally a secton devoted to the activities on the plantation, including the names of the slaves who perfor ed the labors.

The keepers of the diary always began each January 1st, with a prayer.

interruption - four hours later.

As I recall, I think we were talking about Dr. Robinson, the character appearing in Aunt Cammie's grandf ther's diary. Some of his activities were recorded in it, but when these were supplemented by accounts which Aunt Cammie's mother had handed down, the good Dr. seemed more extraordinary as personality than one would be likely to run across in more than one diary.

The Dr., it seems, was a welcomed guest in grandfather's home, for he was versitle as well as excentric, and the oddities were nicely over-balanced by his accomplishments. Whenever grandmother wanted any fish or game for the talhe, Dr. R. was informted, and promptly, venison, ducks, wild turkeys or fish would be rounded up by the good Dr,who, it is said, never wore shoes except when he had to travel down th bayou on steamboat. Another accomplishment of the Dr. was his painting. It seems he was an excelent artist, painting murals for over-the mantles and turning off canvases of merit. I don t suppose I shall ever see any of his paintings, for I suppose they have all disappeared long since, but I should mightily like to, and of course one cannot help thinking of this kinship of Dr. Robinson to nature and the similarlity of such adjustments to the enthusiasms of Audubon who must have been fliting from Louisiana plantation to plantation about the same era.

In the afternoon we ran down to the Hertzog plantation a few miles below Melrose on Main River. The approach to the house is through a splendid avenue of live-oaks, possibly a quarter of a mile in length. Before the war, this place belonged to the LeComte family. The original house at the end of the avenue must have been lovely. It was a three story house, with pillars rising flush with the ground to the roof. The house was square and the gallery running across the front of the h use was duplicated by another running across the rear of the house. From the left rear corner, a whing ran straight backward, and this, too, carried the gallery to its final termination.

After passing Melrose without burning it,--possibly because it

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Nov. 16th - cont.

was owned by a mulato, Metoyer, the next big place the army must have come to was the Hertzog place. At the time, the family was away,--in Texas, I believe. The over-seer was on the front gallery, and he was ordered away from the house which, he was told, was to be burned. Miller, the over-seer, refused to leave, and he was accordingly shot dead. The negroes were joined by the Yankees, and the house was pillaged and set fire to. As she walked out of the house, one of the servants picked up a huge woodencased clock,--about three or four feet tall, and so rescued it from destruction. It is the only piece of furniture from the original house that the Hertzogs now possess.

After the war, the lower section of the pillars were sued to rest the foundation of a new dwelling which is neither suggestive of the orignial house or pleasant inside or out. The rooms are still large, but so drab andfurnished with such poor taste,--inspite of fine pieces, that everyone who visits it is enchant d to fly out of the place. The wing at the back was rebuilt with the same bad taste as the rest of the house, and is pointed to with pride because it contains a chapel where services are held by visiting Catholic clergy from time to ti e.

"Miss" Sally, a wo an about Aunt Cammie's age, aches from morning til night at the Hetzog place. I believe her son, a man of some fourty years, runs the plantation which is extensive, but I understand doesn't more than pay the taxes, if it does that. His wife teaches school, and the two small children, while seemingly as yet imune from the gloom of the place, somehow carry out the atmosphere that nothing in the house is quite in tune,--and seemingly never can be. Au Aunt Cammie says that if she were ev r to undertake doing over the Hertzog place, she would start in by burning th house down, and then possibly cound begin something by way of making the place liv able.

We looked at the stocks which are kept in the basement,--a long pair cap ble of accomodating six offenders, and we were interested in the square bricks in what had once been the floor of the front gallery but which now was merely the spane under the front foreh.

I scarcely need add that I was delighted when we were able to get away from the place. We dropped by Cammie, Jr. in Cloutierville for tea, returning to Melrose for supper, and hence to my maisonette where Celeste came with Aunt Cammie to knit for a while. For our part, Aunt Cammie and I worked on the index for her Plantation scrapbooks.

Nov. ~~16~~ 17th - Friday.

Celeste drove me up to Nachitoches early this morning, after a less leisurely breakfast on my part than usual.

Instead of taking the cement road, we went by way of the river road, and for the first time I had a chance to see the old Prudhomme houses along the way. I remember so well the Prudhommes that appeared in the Diary of the young man whom Lyle quoted from in OLD LOUISIANA. I should certainly like to read that book again, now that I am living in the midst of the country that it refers to in the Diary. What a pity that none of these d rkies, old or young, can read. Certainly a Hottentot secretary would be so ething that would set the neighborhood a rocking.

The thing that impressed me about the Prudhomme houses were their modesty. I suppose most of them were built in the planter type daysbefore elegance got out of hand and moved up to the ostentation mark. I must stop by one of these places to call with Aunt Cammie one of these days, as I imagine they are lovely inside, as most of the old planter houses were.

We returned before dinner, after which I returned to my typewriter for a bit. I discovered that while I had been in town, my house had been fixed up, and Autn Cammie must have been cracking the whip, because all was shipshape as it is whether she is here or not, but so ehow there is always evidence of an added touch if she has been supervising. Today, for instance, there were two lovely bouquets,--one on my big table and one on the smaller round one.

This afternoon it rained. The weather is really too warm for a fire in the hearth, but it looks so cosy, I enjoy keeping a few logs going. We read some of the days from the years 1853, 1862 and were about to go into 1865 when supper rang. I enjoyed the Diary, not only for itself, but more so because it recalled so many thin s to Aunt Cammie who made every page live again. Once her Grandfather mentioned having caught a cub, and so I asked if it were true as I had heard that there were bears in the great cain fields. She assured me that it was so, and said that Theodore Roosevelt used to come down to her Uncle Frank Carret's or Frank Irwin's to hunt with him. I had heard before that T. R. hunted in about every place I had ever dreamed of, but a Louisiana cane-brake was a spot undreamed of for bear hunting so far as I was concerned.

No mail for me today, but much for Aunt Cammie, including books from Alexander Woolcott who had autographed them and forwarded them from Dallas. Robina had written a smart note, too, which gave both Aunt Cammie and me a good round of merriment, and she inclosed the developed pictures of Foster's Mound and the Hayman place which I enjoyed much. A telegram from Kenneth and Rudolph today, saying they were running over from Denton this evening, and will arrive about mid-night, so I shall look at pictures now and possibly receive them later, as Aunt Cammie isn't feeling ve y well and has gone to re t and as the boys are not at home, I seem to be the only one about except for the darkies and my little canine friends.

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Nov. 17th - Saturday.

The Mendolphs arrived last night a little after twelve. Not feeeling very well, Aunt Cammie had retired early, and I accordigly fiddled around until the dogs on my mi gallery announced their arrival.

We cahtted before my heart for an hour or so, and then went over to Lyle's cabin where they were to stay to light the fires and what not. They brought me a smart lounging suit, and so I came back and "lounged " a bit before going to sleep.

I declined their invitation to have breakfast with them this morning, thinking it better that they be freed of any thought of guests so that they might get under power at their leisure after their long journey.

Before mid-morning coffee, they came over to see me, and Aunt Cammie joined us, for a nice long chat before the heart and a tour of the garden before lunch--or dinner. Much of the talk was of weaving of which I understood little or nothing but I was glad to sit in on the donversation and so get better acquainted through assimilating personalities that operate more freely while on subjects that are of primary interest to them.

Kenneth was very interesting in his account of the miero-film recording of books of a film which enables thier cholege of have fac-similies of any book which other libraries which they may care to borrow. It seems the film is very smal,--- gatherm about a half or quarter of an inch in width, and is so placed in the camera that it will record page after page of a book, about five-thousand pages being recorded in a day of six or seven hours, so that when this film is projected on the sereen the reader may have a clear reproduction of each page in a size that will be equall,--or if desired greater in size that the original. When not in use, the film may be returned to is small metal container, thus creating a permanent records of any volume in fac-similie for storage in a tiny space. I understand that the records of many institutions such as banks, insurance houses, etc., are making use of this new invention as a solution to their storing problem for vast quantities of records that otherwise may be hopelessly vast and consequently inaccessable. The NEW YORK TIMES is also being miero-filmed, too, as I suppose other newspapers may be, and this will surely be a record of infinite value and convenience for refersnce purposes later. How I wish such a recording might have been made of all American papers from the beginning of their publication

What with the cloudy weather and occasional drizzles, the inside seemed more conducive to conversation than the garden, and so the Mendolphs and Aunt Cammie did a round of the loom house and went pretty thoroughly into weaving problems. I stayed long enough for a discussion of the Cramie problem, learning for the first time the extreeme durability of this materil when woven into cloth. Using 100 as a basis for its durability, it is said that linen would rate about 25 and so on down to rayon which would carry about 7 per cent. No wonder Aunt Cammie is interested in her patch of Cramie and is thrilled by its possibilities as a commodity for

Orig. Meeting

No. 17th - cont.

The Moutierville family came down for dinner, and after supper we chatted until after eight in Aunt Cammie's room. We then retired for a fireside chat in Lyle's cabin, with excellent dri drinks and hence home for lounging and a new day.

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Nov. 18th. Sunday.

Yp as soon as the first oyster gray of dawn spread its fan across the east, and out for a short turn in the formal garden surrounding the African House, behind which Aunt Cammie has promised we shall open the hedged in fence with a wicket, and in the firleds beyond shall create our little lake which we shall plant with white and pink water lilies and people with a few nice swan. I wanted to see just how this land lay, and if we cannot have a little rivulet that will run dwon to the Cain River at the far end of this new park. I hope, too, that we can built a little mill on this lake like the one at Versailles. I think it would make a lovely guest house or book and map house.

The boys called on me about nine, and we joined Aunt Cammie in the big house. where Amneth and I sat before the fire while the Madam and Rudolph selected shrubs and various plantings for the Rendolph gardens.

They left for Shreveport around ten, where they will have lunch with Robina, and hence will drive to Benton wher they hope to be around seven this evening.

The Cloutirville family came for dinnerand Charles Mazerette came over too from his farm down in the country. As usual, he drove in his buggy with the colt trailing along as a spare.

After dinner we wandered down bythe rivers edge, across the road from the gardens of the big house. There are splendid examples of water lilies, lotus and rare iris down here in this little haven under the hill. Once Aunt Cammie had given it a lot of attention, but has concentrated on other sections of the gardens lately, so that this part has suffered from the onslaught of new growth. The variety of different growths is astonishing.
With several barns, garages, etc., buit on this side of the road, much of the potential beauty of the stop has been temporarily marred. This seems doubly regrettable since the River, in flowing by these gardens,--and which should of course be their soul of beautfy and attractivenesss, is entirely disregardedn and blotted out. When we start building the swan's lake, I shall certainly see to it that the garden at that end of the property runs down to the river itself so that we may gain the maximum of beauty from it. Possibly this will automatically correct the neglect on the front of the residence.

After dinner we all rested for an hour, had coffee in my house, and then went riding to Cote Joyeuse, as mentioned so frequently and so intimately in the Diary section of the book. We saw all the Prudhomme and Cloutier places he mentions in his book, the lane in which he used to walk with his blackstone. Unfortunately his house has been destroyed Aunt Cammie has the complete three volumes of this Diary in her library How much I wish we were together to read these volumes together and visit these old plantations in mutual enthusiasm to make these little pilgrimages twice as precious.

I am impressed by the comparative modest of these Prudhomme and Cloutier acrages, bringing the plantation owners into close re-

Nov. 18th

lationship. Obviously the cotton in ante-bellum days brought in a substantial income for so many plantations of limited production to live so so well.

Aunt Cammie has of course known many of these families, some of whom passed through those trying days when General Banks swept along these river roads of Isle Brevelle, burning all the polantation houses. Today's visit makes it clear enough why 400 houses could have been burned along the banks. I suppose it is remarkable that places like Melrose, Cashmere Plantation and others did not go up in smoke, too. A couple of details about Cashmere, as told to Aunt Cammie by the owner sets out how Cashmere escaped. The mistres

of the place explained to Aunt Cammie that the house, which was nx new at the time Banks arrived, was saved by the quick thinking of the head of the household who placed red caps on the childrens heads. Aunt Cammie said she had known that red caps were indicative of only one things,--showing the traveler a man who would carry his suitcase, but she never knew a red cap would carry a plantation, too.

Aunt Cammie knew one of the old Prudhumme ladies who died some time back at the age of 90. Somehow her plantation had escaped the firebrands of General Banks and stil stands to this day. After the war she made a trip to Baltimore with her son who went there to study dentistry. Old servants have said that when Madame Prudhomme started out for this rather extend trip,--I suppose it lasted several years, she instructed everyone to keep the house just as it was, and that she even left money in the dresser drawers, etc., indicating great faith, surely, in the stability of an established order

In Baltimore, her son married a Maryland belle and they eventually returned to Isle Brevelle to live. Old Madame Prudhomme had one excentricity,--she had an enormous chest kept under her great fourposter bed, and no one was ever allowed to touch it. When she dide a few years ago, the younger Madame Prudhomme immediately called in a lady from an adjoining Prudhomme plantation, and before the old lady was buried, they opened this great chest which hasd stayed so long beneath the great bed. It contained a marvelous treasure of silver, plates, platters, knives and spoons and Heaven knows what all. It would appear that the younger Madame Prudhomme didn't set to high a store by it, as she used the great silver soup ladels to prxxx prop open doors. This silver is still in the young Madame Prudhomme's family, unless she has thxxxgx thrown it out for some reason or other,--possibly in favor of Woolworth cutleryy

home before sundown, supper, and au revoir to the Cloutiervilles before five thirty. Aunt Cammie retired immediately, and I sat on my gallery for a while, enjoying the close of this warm summer's day which has seemed more like May than November. I stretched out on my sofa for a while to listen to Orson Wells do the Garden of Allah, with the only light coming from the hearth, and from my beloved Quatorzien window from whih I watched the bright southern stars twinkle in their curtain of gray blue gauze.

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Nove. 20th - Monday.

Another beautfful, May-like morning. Up early, bathed and shaved before breakfast, and so ready to further explore the site of the new garden behind the African House.

Batted out quite a stack of mail before noon, and was consequently ready to bolt ofr the big house when I heard the dinner bell. We had our first sample of the new cook's handiwork, and while she had said that she didn't know how to cook but could sure learn, I was convinced that she was getting places fast, even though she was a little confused about setting the table and how to serve without Clemence's help, for Clemence had been put to bed, and the new cook was more or less on her own.

Elmer, of all things, is her name, and she is a likeable youngish Aunt Jemima., with a beaming face and a kindly voice. When the only remaining people left at the table were Aunt Sammie and I, Elmore came in to remove the dishes, and Aunt Sammie engaged her in a bit of conversation. First of all there was the question of the chickens which Elmer had brought with her when she moved to her cabin on the plantation. Two of these, it seems disappeared the first night she arrived. As she pointed out to Aunt Sammie:

"I shur knowed who got dem chickens. Dat nigger next door to me, he come over and split wood for me. I seen him eyeing dem chickens and whar des roostin' and I tells him I can see whar my chicken am a-goin' if dey goes. And shu ' nuf, des gwine went".

It's fun to listen in on such conversations and usually a sight to contemplate, too, because the "get ups" these simple folk effect, is frequently funny and sometimes rather pleasant to the eye and imagination. I suppose Elmer is about 30, although she might be more or less. She is rather fat, wears no corset and exudes much about the waste-line. Her color is rich chocolate, rather shinny, and her teeth are strikingly white. Her hsuband killed a white man in a saloon on the plantation, and although it i the concensus of opinion that the white man deserved it and that society lost little or nothing, still, in Louisiana, a negro just doesn't kill a white man, and so Elmer's husband vanished in the night and has never returned, leaving her with three children. It of course goes without saying that he can never let hi self be found in Louisiana again, and so Elmer is just as sure a whidow as though her husband were dead.

"Its a shame, Elmer, that you had to loose your chickens," Aunt Sammie observed,"but re ember I told you to sell everything before you came. Sure enough, if you don t watch out, that same man,--and I know him because he steals plenty of my pears and things,--he'll steal you and your children, too".

"Yassum," Elmer agreed in principle, "But he ain't gwine to steal me and the chillun, 'cause we'se juss expenses, and ain't nobody gwine t' steal dat."

Nov. ~~19~~ 20th - cont.

Aunt Sammie came over for mid-afternoon coffee, and we started to do some writing together, but we didn't get very far, for first Rita came about something in the house, and then Frank returned for the coffee and to receive instructions for Sam Brown and Regin, and then followed Elmer for instructions about supper. It seems that Clemence hasn't been much of a help to her because she has prefered to do the whork herself rather than show poor Elmer. But in explaining the situation Elmer made it quite clear that she didn't want the Madam to say anything to Clemence because she didn't want "no hard feelin's" with her.

After supper, we sat and talked at the table for a time. It was already dark outside. Elmer had taken out the dishes and had been alone in the kitchen when sud enly we heard much giggling going on out there. Frank had come in, and thinking Elmer had gone home, was startled to find her doing dishes in the kitchen which was pitch dark. I don't know whether she thought that this was the custom or whether she didn't want to disturb the Madam, but whatever it was she gave Frank a surprise with her rattling around with her dishpan in the dark, and after the surprise, he automatically was moved to the giggles and accordingly had a wonderful time polking fun at poor Aunt Jemima.

Aunt Sammie retired early, and I worked for a while by my window, but the night seemed too precious to be wasted by staying inside and so I took a walk down to Cain River and back. I am so impressed by the vast difference in the Southern sky as opposed to th t of New York. There is always seems such a dark, blue-black color, while here it always seems so much leh lighter, like a soft gray, powder b blue, with somehow an added brilliancy to th stars and moon on nights such as we are having now. It seems like such a long distance back that I saw the full moon rising opposite Lookout Mountain.

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Nov. 21st - Tuesday.

Another beautiful rose-dgray dawn and Frank came early with my coffee, and like a kindly Louisiana Prometheus,, kindled his accustomed morning fire.

I dashed through a cold shower and shave and was listening to Press-Radio news when he returned with my breakfast.

At eight-thirty I met Celeste and together we drove to Nachitoches where I had a session with Dr. McCook, the Dentist, and picked up plenty of local gossip.

The color-line in Nachitoches was the subject of much contemplation by the local citizenery. There have been several versions of the current problem, but this is what I deducted as approximating the truth:

The Catholic Church in Nathitoches, ordained for worship by whites, functions normally, but another Catholic church, is set aside primarily for colored people, and in this Church, both negro and mulatto celebrate the religion based on the theory of the brotherhood of man, although the distinction between the negro and the mulatto ceases to exist in every detail except the actual celebration of the Mass. All social gatherings and common endeavor in raising funds, etc., is strickly divided into two groups, the Mulatto feeling the presence of a color line between him and the Negro just as distinctly as the White man feels the line of demarkation between himself and the mulatto.

A white priest, officiating in this Church of color, determined to destroy this color barrier by asking the negroes to attend a social gathering in the Church's Recreation Hall at an evening's entertainment engineered by the mulattoes. The mulattoes, however, had different ideas, and therefore posted a member of their group at the door, with instructions that in the event any negroes should try to attend the meeting, they should be advised that this gathering was for Mulattoes and that the negores were free to use the Hall at any other time convenient for them to hold their meeting.

It is the concensus of opinion among those who have lived long in this region, that the preist made a grave error in trying to effect such a gathering of two groups which are so thoroughly conscious of each of their own differences and superiority.

Shortly after mulattoes began to arrive, a few negroes presented themselves at the door, but were advised by the doorman that the meeting was for mulattoes exclusively. This made the negroes ripping mad, and, knowing that the mulato who advised them regarding the finer points of the meeting was employed in a local movie house, the negores went directly to the manager of the theatre and vehemently denounced the mulato to the manager of the movie place, swaring that the negroes, en masse, would henceforth boycott the house if the mulatto employee were not discharged immediately. The manager therupon fired the mulato.

And so the town buzzes, many taking up the cudgel for the

mulatto who nevertheless is not likely to find a job through his sympathizers, and some siding with the negroes on the asis that the mulattoes shouldn't be so fussy about the color line, and others who feel that the preist made a mess of things by trying to do something which is doomed to failure before it is even tried.

It is rather surprising that white clergy in this region who have lived here for years so frequently seem unmindful of innate prejudices, and consequently run the risk time and again of stirring up animosity between the mulatto versus the negro, or in some cases, a hub-bub between the whites and the mulattoes for no good reason.

A case in point is old Father Baumgarten who has been here in the Lettoyer church at Melrose for twenty-five years. It seems that there was some sort of a church fair to be held in Nachitoches some time ago, and the various booths were arranged in separate tents. Each tent was labled by its various groups, so that the negro tent was clearly visible as to character, as was all the other groups in the several churches which were sponsoring baths in separate tents. Having lived in this section, Father Baumgarten should have known better than to tothink he could attach a streamer to the mulatto tent reading:FRENCH CREOLE TENT. But this he proposed to do until Aunt Cammie pointed out to him that some of the oldest and proudest white people in Nachitoches were loud in their claim of French Creole ancestry, and that labeling the mulatto tent by such a titlex as he had selected would stir up plenty of needless animosity. The streamer was accordingly disposed of,--and wisely so.

There are three priests here at the Lettoyer Church at Melrose,--Heaven along knows why there should be more than one. They are all white, and last night they were at Celeste's to spend the evening, with pinocle and what not. One of them has just arrived from New York where he has been seven years in Harlem so colored faces in his congregation will not seem out of the ordinary to him. I of course havn't been here long enough to find out what these representatives of Christ do for their flock, but somehow I feel that there is a pretty stong aroma of 18th century clericalism permeating the region. A convent attached to the church teaches about 300 mulatto children a year,--but the rumor has it on an authority of one who has lived here for more than fourty years, that these children are taught to say their prayers,--and that's about all.. As I contemplate the picture of this nieghborhood, I instinctively find myself murmuring the lines from some forgotten poem:"Ignorance, intolerance, superstion, hate, The men at arms come riding to the birthday of the state".

By now I b lieve it is pretty generally admitted that the colored man has far greater intuitive powers than the white man. Aunt Cammie says she always finds the colored person far more interesting than his counter-part without color. Unquestionably most of the negroes and mulattoes I have known here are twice as intellegent as the white man, in spite of the fact that few if any of them can either read or write. Until the economic problem of the nation

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has been solved, I suppose there will be little chance of attacking the color problem and determining the status of color in organized society, and whether color will ever be worthy of a place beside the white man,--and if the white man will ever be able to compete with color in the event that once given an equal status, the color may prove itself superior to the white.

After three hundred years since color was introduced into America, nothing seems to have done that approaches any sort of a satisfactory solution of the color problem, nor has the emancipation of color done very much to bring about an acceptable solution of this complex problem. An Englishman, speaking of war wrote a few years back:

"Peace on earth we pray and sing it
And pay a thousand priests to bring it,
But after two thousand years of saying Mass,--
We've got as far as poison gas."

And form where I sit, it would appear that we have been about as brilliantly successful in solving the color question.

The Good Book says that the fields are white for the harvest

Somehow I sense in all sections of the country a feeling toward color not unlike what some wit of the 18th century crystalized in a sentence reading the common people:"Below the lesser nobility begin the higher animals." Particularly is this true in the North and East where people are slowly becoming conscious of color whereas in the South, long having recognized color,the people on the other side of the line are treated a little more as though they were a responsibility of the white side of the line.

I cannot help but wonder, however, if --interruption.

Nov. 22nd- Wednesday.

These are nights that are filled with music." Henry van Dyke's poetry becomes more the coming of a new day:

"What time the rose of dawn,
Is laid across the lips of night,
And all the drowsy little stars have fallen asleep in light.
It is then a wandering wind awakes
And it runs from tree to tree,
And borrows words from all the birs
To sound the reveillie".

Beneath this Southern moon, one senses more acutely than in othe climes that when half of nature goes to sleep with the setting of the sun, another halfinstinctively awakes and so projects a movement and murmur of life all through the night.

Perhaps this activity is more apparent on moonlit nights, since an ample chorus of feathered friends swells the whisper of night into an undulating song that sometimes hushes itself toward silence only to swell it again toward a distinctly audible message.....

The moon was high last evening before the sun was spent, so that the borrowed light of the satelite smoothed the bridge from major to minor of the insects song when the fire in the west dissolved into the silver shine of the moon.

Aunt Tammie dropped by before supper to tell me that Lyle had telephoned from New Orleans to say that he would not be able to come on the evening train. She was depressed, and I thought a little turn through the garden with her would would do us both good. We strolled by the African House, and back to the rear garden, pearing through the fence where the wicket is to be concealed, and beyond which the new artificial lake will be laid out and swans will swim and I dream. In spite of her disappointment, she could turn from one subject to another in a manner which I found extraordinary, since I have never known anyone who could dominate, and seemingly eradicate disappointments with such apparent success. I was sorry to hear the dinner bell, for I should have gladly walked in the evening light much longer.

Supper was a hilarity, approximating the noon meal of a few hours earlier. At the mid-day meal, Elmer, the cook, had worn an enormous black hat on her head, in stricking contrast to the yellow stocking leg with an artificial flower stuck in it, which she had effected the day before. Tonight, to my disappointment, she wore no head gear. Much of the det ils of table setting had been over-looked, with a spareity of bread plates and a dearth of soup-spoons for which we had no need. Aunt Tammie had especially requested toast be served for Dan, but no toast appeared. Asked if she had forgotten it, Elmer said she hadn't. She didn t serve any toast because she didn't know what toast was or how one made it. Aunt Tammie was marvelous. She merely said:"That's alright Elmer, -- you'll learn and then it will be easy". I am beginning to realize why a trained servant on a plantation is so highly prized.

After dinner, Frank came into the dinning room to get Elmer under

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way, for like the angle he is, he has been helping her get used to her new domaine. Frank and Aunt Cammie had much talk regarding the progress being made, with occasional remarks by Elmer who is making every effort to succeed, poor thing, but is getting about as far up to the moment, as a person who can't swim, who, upon finding himself in the water, thrashes around furiously but really is stil where he last found himself.

Again it bore itself upon me what a saving grace is a sense of humor. Aunt Cammie could see something funny in most of the short comings during the past two sessions at the table, and could gently indicate methods of avoiding a repetion of similar disasters on the morrow. What with a full family for dinner and a flock of neighbors and guests, I think the kitchen section and the turkey problem ought to be mighty. Frank had planned to go to the church where there is a special service for the 25th anniversary of Father Baumgarten's service in the Metteyer church. Frank said he thought he wouldn t go, but r ther would stick by Elmer in the kitchen, since neither Aita or Clemence would be with her because of the service.

"What I'se a-gwine to do"Frank soberly observed," is to get me a dress and put on tomorrow, and then I'll be in the place you needs me."

"Frank Moran, you're a sight. You'll do nothing of the sort" Aunt Cammie countered laughin ly. "In the first place, you've got to go to the service for Father Baumgarten as you had planned. I wrote him a note this afternoon, telling him not to let all these priests and Bishops kill him off tomorrow. And you, Frank, have got to go to the service inthe church and see how things go, and I'll wear the dress with Elmer in the kitchen."

When plans for the morrow were finished and the servants had left,, we went into the library and turned through some of the volumes of the Louisiana Historical Society, searching for Louise Butler's History of Felician Parrish. Of course we didn't find it, but we got so entangled in other interesting articles, that the loss of one jewel was compensated for by the finding of ~~xx~~ many another,--An autobiography of Charles Gayarre, the Life of a Planter in ante-bellum days, a History of John Donald's Plan to Free his Slaves,--some sort of a trick by which through over-time labor, they might within 15 years buy their freedom and thus be sent back to Africa. It seems that some of these did eventually get back to Africa, but were not long in writing to "Papa" for return passage, since they prefered their life as slaves in Louisana to freedom in Africa.

We said goodnight about eight-thirty and I went to my little house, lingering on my gallery to contemplate the wonders of this heavenly night.

I sat for a while by my glowing hearth, listening to some Motzart music on the radio, and gazing out of the window at the peaceful Louisiana countryside, so soft and powdery blue beneath the spangled sky. What a peaceful day it has been, and what a busy one. --a Dawn effervescing with the songs of many a bird, punctuated with the crowning of the roosters before the first rays of the sun appeared as the moon lingered on in the West, and a rumpled sound of the poor, incarcerated gobblers, seemingly sensing an impending sword of Damocles, a delicious Spring-like morning, a warm sunny hour on the gallery going trhough mail that means everything worth while to me,--missles of life

from those I love and whose messages in one form or another, bring their hearts to make my heart the warmer and a life, already delcious, more fulsome and worth while. And Aunt Cammie who somehow makes everything have an added value, and Frank and Elmer, and Sam Brown and all, to make the little fascents of color that so enchantingly catch the flare from the great beacon that shines for us all. Tomorrow is supposed to be Thanksgiving. For me it will be so,--but no more so than today.

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Nov. 23rd,- Thursday, Thanksgiving.

Up early but lingered long over my delicious breakfast, and listening the news broadcasts which were of no especial interest, but good as a fill-in and anx excuse to have another round of coffee for me and another saucer for old Uncle White Foot.

Finished most of my mail before nine thrity when Clemence came to say that Aunt Cammie would like me to have mid-morning coffee with her at the big house.

I found here in a dressing gown--the first time I ever did,--and sitting on the divan at the foot of her big bed, with a visitor sitting in a neighboring chair. It seems that Aunt Cammie had had a touch of pleurisy during the night, and was accordingly going along slowly today. Frank will need that dress, I do believe.

The visitor was Messeline, who figured in Old Louisiana, the section about Christmas at Melrose. She is a good natured woman who used to cook for Aunt Cammie. At one time she was the wife of Tuny, but each took unto the other another mate, and Messeline now lives down the road,--I know not where but I suppose toward Madame Aubert-Mesque's house.

In spite of her condition, Aunt Cammie was equal to many a hearty laugh, and Messeline was not remiss in providing a plenty as both former mistress and servant reviewed old times and remarked upon the present.

It seems that Messeline's husband has already exhausted all his cash which he earned from cotton. On top of this he has secured a car,- through C. M., I believe. Heaven knows how they will get through the winter. Messeline had driven over to Melrose to purchase some stuffing for a mattress but discovered after she arrived that she didn't have enough money. Aunt Cammie announced that she would get nothing from her, what with having a car and all. Messeline merely giggled for she knew perfectly well that Aunt Cammie would provide her with a little slip for the store which would produce the material she wanted.

"It serves you right to have to sleep on the floor", Aunt Cammie said with a twinkle in her eye. "Aint none of yo u get any sense havin' a car".

"Yaass'um, yass mam, Miss Henry, you shou is right. But, you see, we'se all got a car now, and now we shu does need it to irde our trouble s away".

"Lordy, Messeline, all you folks is just alike. Aint no use tryin' to get any sense into your heads. But after all, maybe you've got more than we have, 'cause you don't worthy about nuthin', and we all are a-worrin' about ourselves and you too."

"It shu am de truth, mam and de Lord know we ain't got no business wiv a car".

Nov. 23rd, - cont.

Aunt Cammie was good to put on such a show for my benefit. It was clear that she wan't up to form physically and her voice showed the effect of the pleurisy under which she was suffering. But as I sipped my coffee, she kept Messeline chattering along in a fashion that would clearly display all those basic qualities of the race which she so xxx distinctively typified. For Messeline negro with a luscious chocolate color, deep, rich and velvety that her work in the cotton patch hasn't been able to mar. What's more she is silly, kind hearted, animal-like, God fearing, happy-go-lucky, sober, quick to find humor in any situation and with a directness at arriving at profound truths that a savant could only wonder at and wish he hadn't wasted a life time seeking a universel that Messelineripples off the end of her carmine lipsas thoughtlesslyas a duck shakes water off its tale upon climbing out of a pond.

As a leader, Aunt Cammie mentioned something about some one who worked for her wearing a wig. Messeline mentioned that her wonther used to wear one. I understand many x negressses do. It seems even Clemence swears she will not appear in the big road after dark without wearing hers. But Messeline's mother had trouble keeping hers, which Aunt Cammie had bought for her. One night her husband got mad at her and chasing her about the cabin, caught hold of it, tore it off and flung it into the fire. Aunt Cammie got after him for that, saying that he would have to pay fx her for it, since it was hers. Of course she never dreamed that he would, and needless to say she was right. Another time a rumpus flared in the cabin where Messeline's mother lived. After her again, her husband chased her about the place, but she succeeded in eluding him and crawled under the bed so he couldn t get her. But she forgot to pull one foot behind her and her husband accordingly drew a gun and shot her through the instep. He then raced over to Aunt Cammie excitedly and announced that his wife had shot herself through the foot. It was a pretty serious matter so far as her recovery went, and so Aunt Cammie dragged her to Shreveport, ninety miles away to a hospital. It was obvious to the doctors that the wound could not have been self-inflicted, but no charges were brought against the husband. Aunt Cammie used to make him go to Shreveport to see her, but after a trip or two, he balked. Aunt Cammie upbraided him but he countered with this:"You know, Madam, I'se got as much need of Shreveport as a dead man's got of de world." --And that ended that episode.....

Lyle came up from New Orleans on the eight o'clock train. After he had paid his devoirs at the big house, he called on me and we went over to his house and talked long on plantations and whatnot. Frank had rearing fires going, and he was delighted when Lyle told him how nicely Frank's son was making out in his new job at the St. Charles in New Orleans. There is something imperial in Lyle's capacity to concern himself with the doings of all his friends, both white and colored, that it is readily understandable how everyone is attracted to a personalityso lavishly endowed with a genuine concern for the happiness of the individual.

Of current goings on in New Orleans he spoke much. Sinclair

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Lewis is in town and according to report he is to stay there druing the winter with his niece, a adoring child of some 18 summers. Dorothy Thompson is expected to visit the city later in the season. I learn for the first time that a certain author called David Cohen,--or some similar name, living in Mississippi, collaborates with Miss Thompson on some of her columns. Hw the Nasties would enjoy that morsel.

We spoke much of Grace King, too, whom Lyle had known for years. He described her as a small, whisppy white haired person with great brown eyes and a decided tendency toward pretention toward those whom she did not know well. I suspect that this latter "virtue" never get into full play with Lyle, for he so exudes an absence of anything bordering on pretention that I should imagine he could have easily deflated Madam King,possibly without either of them realizing that he could set her feet on the ground. He mentioned a hot summer's Sunday afternoon a number of years ago when he received a frantic messages from Grace. He rushed over to her house, prepared for almost any eventuality, and was momentarily relieved to find her dressed in white, striding up an down her great salon, which was peopled with ghostly furniture in white slip covers and resplendent with glittering chandeliers. In her left had she was weilding a palm leaf fan mightily, her billowy tresses waving first to the right of her face and then to the left as the fan passed frantically before her face. In her left hand she was clutching a letter from her New York publishers, and it was this messages that had so turned her world tospy-turvy. In it they had beg her pardon for bring up the matter, but they did wish to touch on the fact that the memoirs for which she was under contract with them were over a year passed due and since no one can foresee the eventualities of the distant future too clearly, might they not hope to have the manuscript within the near future. Miss King was outraged that they should dare insinuate that she was going to die before finishing these memoires, and what was she to reply to these damned Yankees, etc., etc., Lyle, of course, agreed with her that their callusness was outrageous, that they should be publicly denounced, etc., etc., and I suppose hex eventually got her cooled off and possibly was instrumental in getting her to finish the manuscript,--which he says she should never have written in the first place.. I spoke of my enjoyment of her OLD CREOLE FAMILIES which he likes too, and he recommended her SOCIETY OF OLD NEW ORLEANS which he says has much value, too. We spoke of her literary association with Charles Gayarre whom I admire so much. We also bemoaned the pity of it that Gayarre at 85 should have had to scribble for bread, and how Grace King had assisted the Gayarres, inheriting the authors papers, of which I feel she may have borrow much for her old Creole Families, and how she took care of his widow until her death.

I much enjoyed Lyle's account of his severe illness last winter. His account of the first pangs of illness during the Mardis Gras celebration in which he participated, costumed as a Dalmatian. Of the ensuing illness, the operation and the long convelesance, during which psychiatry was brought into play,--with consequent items to pay, when he was delerious so long. One phase of this he described with particular clarity and color. It seems that he thought he was viewing so e marvelously rare and beautiful canvasses, and was considerably annoyed at those people of his acquaintance who happened to be present because they refused to consider his imagine pictures very seriously. The one that struck him most forcibly was a huge Renoir of gorgeous color and design,--a tree with eautifuly green foliage in which three lovely nude pink ladies disported themselves with measured abandon,--one reclining along a limb, another reading a book and the thried with her feet drawn up so that she rested her head on her knees. The perspective was down through the branches through which shown a wonderous golden sunshine, the whole composition was done in strong masterful stokes that the brush had created by using one fell swope to indicate in an inch-wide line the beautiful brown tresses of each lady, and the distant background was equally forceful in splotches of titanic depths and strength. It has always seemed such a pity that people who dream such colorful masterpieces never seem to be those whose talent lines along lines that would enable them to reproduce them in paint. .....

There was talk, too, of Louisiana politics. Lyle, of course, has known many a great or near great in New Orleans and Baton Rouge over a period of years, and his slant on current reaction in New rleans to the men who were stupdi enough to let themselves get caught in their fancy manipulations of State funds is an education One rather strange aspect seems to be that public resentment seems to be concentrated against ex Governor Leache, who, as I understand it, was never very important in the graft set up or even as a headliner in the current investigations, although of course everyone knows that he is as deep in the scandles as all the rest,--but probably not more so, and possibilet with less odiousness than many. At the University in Baton Rouge, workmen have smashed his name out of the tiling and removed all evidence of memorials, such as bronze tablets on buildings, etc., which carried his name. I guess he never did have much money before he got into the Governor's chair. neither did his sister whom Lyle knows. She had studied for a good degree in chemistry and after receiving it looked long for a job, refusing one at a fat salary,in L. S. U. because of her aversion to being connected with "pull in gaining a position of that nature. When about fourty, she finally landed a job in some Governmental Bureau in Washington, feel in love with a chemist there, and married him about a year ago. Six months later he developed "an elaborate cancer of the stomach" and either is dying or has died, and the former Miss Leache called on Lyle the other day, and talked incessantly about the innocence of her brother of which she is genuinely persuaded,--but, as Lyle says, how can you talk sensibly with anyone like her at such a time,--particularly since she holds views regarding the ex-Governor which run so contrary to all available records.

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Nov. 24th. -Friday.

It was approaching three o'clock this morning when Lyle and I had had our last drink of the evening and talked plantation in the way we both love, although the flow of highballs might well have been damed at that hour, our conversation could easily have slid along much longer. With characteristic courtesy, Lyle escorted me to my maisonette. It was a glorious sky,--with brilliant, round moon and huge cumulus clouds stretching like great plumes across the glittering heavens. It seems to me the African house never looked more -frican in the clear mellow light.

Up early for a walk down to the Melrose Bridge here s the Cain beforeleaping through a cold shower before breakfast with Uncle White Feet before a glowing grate. Aunt Vammie and Lyle came over for mid-

morning coffee and much talk about Natchez country and Saint Francisville. Dinner came close upon the heels of coffee and conversation, and when we were done and had hurriedly glanced trhough the mail, -yle and I walked over to call on Leline. Leline is suffering from rhumatism but when she saw us coming through the second gate, she flew around fast and daubed on some rice power which gave her a curious appearance, what with the old blue bandana handkerchief over her wrinkled old face.

Leline loves Lyle and hadn't seen him in ever so long so that her welcome was doubly warm. We stepped into the room where She cooks and eats and sleeps,--one bed in the corner where she and "General Beauregard sleep, and another bed in an adjoining corner where her Nephew rests. The beds were nicely made, and looked astonishingly frest and clean,-- what with the xx chickens and geese and a dozen cats that wander about the room at will. The sun was bright outside but the breeze was bracing so that the birds feathered creatures were glad to linger inside, sharing the hearth with a collection of cats which alternately dozed and sniffed at the covered sauce pans that were simmering on the bricks. Leline, at -yle's request, trotted out her family album which we went through leisurely, asking Leline about this one and that, and remarking here and there upon one or another of the striking features of her mulatto relatives and kinsfolk

Many a fresh religious picture had been added to the collection pasted on the wall since Lyle's last visit, and Lyle made a little tour of the cabin looking at these as Leline held court in her straight back chair, two legs of which rest on the brick block and the other two on the well hardened earth which formed thefloor of the cabin. No wonder Leline, at 85 feels an occasional twing of rheumatism.

She spoke much of old times, and slid into French as she regaled us with episode after episode, punctuating her remarks with a gentle sweep of the broom she held as her enthusiasm mounted or as the chickens got to curious a out the contents of the steaming pots and pans. Perhaps her most interesting detail of the old days was her account of All Saints Day and the custom which formerly obtained when this service was held at night in the graveyard where all the graves were decorated with lighted candles. -eline said that was wonderful, but sometimes a little difficult when a breeze might blow hard and the candles would all go out. She hinted, however, that because of this unpredictable element in the celebration,--and because the youths and maidens sometimes tarried too long among the graves after the service was finished and the cele

Nov. 24th.
celbrants gone, the service was changed from night to afternoon, but Leline still thought the former custom was much the prettier.

Lyle had now completed his tour of this extraordinary room, and so we took our leave, Lyle giving her some money and promising to send her some more xxxxx medecine.

We followed our steps back along the river road, stopping at the saloon before crossing the bridge.

The saloon is a low white-washed building, set in one of the triangle s formed by the three roads converging at the -elrose bridge. From its low gxx gallery, one has a marvelous sweet of the river from up Leline's way and along in front of the place where the wooden structure stretches across the deep blue water like van Gogh's Bridge at Arles, and so along the curve and around the bendwhere it turns out of sight to sweep back after a mile or so topass directly in frnn of Melrose.

Inside, the xxxxx saloon is divided by a arttition which cuts the place in two, the bar at the rear marking the end of the partition. With this arrangement, the white customer enters by the door at the right end of the gallery and the colored at the left door, so that while neither white nor black can see the other while they stand at the bar, one barman can see all his customers and take care of their wants with dispatch. A boy of 16,--mulatto -- was dispensing liquer, seemed sadly out of place. He was a little uncertain as to the kind of whiskey that Lyle thought would make a good highball, but his effort to please out-weighed his inexperience, andthe highballs came around in due time. The customerson the colored side overbalanced the numerical strength of those on the white side, and so we went out on the gallery to enjoy ours as we let our eyes wander up and down the Cain, talking thw while of Feliciana Plantations, the Pink House, -rs. Bone Ware whom Lyle had seen as a youth, what was happening to Bellegrove as it slipped swiftly into decay and what would happen to Asphodel when the two old ladies now living there have gone. An occasional friend of color would saunter by, and Lyle would dispense hospitatlity for all, as slowly the time marched along and our own parade of tall cold glasses grew impressive and somewhat staggering.

At four we started home, stopping for a l ttle chat with acquaintances at the Garage, and hence to the garden gate, where we found -unt Vammie making -am -rown, -egis and a half dozen more workmen jump crooked, as they set out bulbs, trimmed back bushes and prepared thebeds for "winter".

Together we three wnadered through the gardens and over to Lyle's, where he and I had --for a change - a highball, andmuch plantation talk in which -unt Vammie joined with delight, until we heard the supper bell. It was xx cosy there, sitting in the big overstuffed armchairs,before the blazing logs, and surrounded by shelves of books, on either side of the fireplace andflanked by the rich old portraits in oil of Grand Pere -ugustin and other prominent people of color of days long since gone by.

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Nov. 25th, - Saturday.

Talked late with Kyle last night, arriving home between two and three. Up at six still sleepy but wide awake after a cold shower and a good cup of black coffee.

The big house was still asleep as I crossed the front garden and headed toward Montrose. The Cain River bridge was still merged into the landscape like an early paintin of the Far East in which earth and wood all mingle with each other in such sympathic colorings that each is a part of the other. Only the surface of the river broke the brown,--a vast blue silent surface, with a bank of pink flecked coulds brought down from on high where they penciled a streamer of minute clouds looking for all the world like a vast plume from a pheasents tail. Large miles of invigorating walk to Montrose and thence by bush to Natchitoches, and so after doing several errands, back to Melrose a little after one.

I had expected to be late but I hadn't figured on Carolyn Berman being here, and when ever Carolyn calls any established routine may well be thrown out of gear.

It was good to find Robina, and she and Kyle sat and talked with me as I swallowed my turkey. Carolyn had left just before I arrived, but I really didn t miss seeing her, for after traveling twenty miles with her sevefal friends on her way home, she discovered she had left her pocketbook at Melrose, so back she came again as I was giving my chops a final lick.

We pushed Carolyn out of the door and Aunt Cammie, Robina, Kyle and I mounted another chariot and drove over to Charles cabin, six miles away on Little River. The lane from here to there is more like a trail than a thoroughfare, for I guess it runs through nothing but Henry acres and is used almost exclusively by tenants who probably don't have to worry about the mud holes and gulleys which the automobile must contend with. It is through this section of the plantation that one drives through the vast pecane groves where the field hands work after cotton time is over. Aunt Cammie or C. C. once sent a man out here to count the number of pecane trees. He was gone a week and then returned with the information that he had counted ten thousand. I doubt if anyone know how many there actually are, in fact they seem as vague in the real of precission on this point as does Aunt Cammie does when I ask her how many families live on the plantation, for she says she has no idea,--possibly fifty but that is merely a guess. It seems odd to pass these little cabins at irregular intervals, sometimes as far apart as half a mile, past barns placed at random in big fields, past weather beaten churches, sometimes in the open and sometimes hidden away in bayous through groves of hoary moss draped oaks, never realizingany exact particulars regarding the inhabitants and buildings of this vast property.

Nov. 25th, - Sat. - continued.

On our way backto Melrose, we drove along Cain River for a short distance, stopping at Duncans house. He is a descendent of the Metoyers and is accordingly kin to Madame Aubert-Roeque and most of the other mulattoes in this area, known as Isle Brevelle. Duncan's house is old and considerably in need of repairs. He met us at the gate,--a hearty man of about 70, I suppose, and immediately he and Aunt Cammie began bantering along lines that only old acquaintances can puruse. She explained to him that we had called to see the painting which he insisted in keeping in his house so that it would be ruined just as soon as possible. He laughed and dismissed the disintegration part of her speech as of no importance whatsoever, although it was evident that he did treasure the picture. We went around to the rear of the house which is the only way one can enter, since the front is so badly in need of repair that the windows and doors have been boarded up. Although there must have been several rooms in the house originally, it appeared that only one was now inhabitable,--a kitchen, living room, bedroom, all jammed into one dim conglomeration, lighted only by the entrance door. Just to the left of the door hung the old family portrait, and three feet away on the adjoining wall an open fireplace,--and this was about all I could make out in this rather dismal menage. Duncan got a coal oil lamp, lighted it and held it up for us in from t of the picture. It is a portrait of a youth holding a toy in one hand. A delicate butterfly is poised on the other hand. It is an Uncle of Duncan and was probably painted somewhere between 1840 and 1850 when this mulatto family were lords of t is region. The picture is in bad condition, and when I remarked upon the paint that had been chipped off near the base, Duncan said that the children sometimes point out the picture with a stick, and that is how it gets rubbed out in places. Aunt Cammie asked him why she couldn't borrow the picture and have it restored so that those who inherit it may have something rather than "nuthin", but Duncan is contented to let is hang where it is in the damp kitchen, alternating with frosts of winter and blasts of heat from the open fire where the family cooking is done. As I stepped out of the house and followed the beautiful curs of the Cain as it winds past his yard, I couldn't help but think of the old, old theory as to the ownership of a work of Art, and if the creator or owner of it by title isn't in reality nothing more than a trustee.

And so home for supper and then up to Aunt Cammie's room where the four of us sat for a couple of hours, talking plantation and experiences in Louisiana with a amusing twist to the whole conversation that kept all of us falling out of our chairs,--particularly when Kyle let go on some of Louisiana gentry and Aunt Cammie recounted some of her read-runding prepensities. I shall recount a couple of these tales:

Some of Aunt Cammie's relatives,--an Uncle, I believe, was traveling before the war on a Mississippi steamboat. With another prominent Louisiana planter, he got to discussing hogs and the

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value of one breed as opposed to another. The gentlement disagreed and the discussion waxed warm. Somm things get to such a pitch that one of the gentry bunted the other off his chair, and to the surprise of one and the distress of the other, the bunted one crashed through the railing on the hurricane deck where they were sitting. Fortunately the man did not fall into the river, but landed on the deck below. The fall, however, was a serious one, breaking both arms, so that the man could never use either of them in feeding, shaving or otherwise raising his hands. A body servant accordingly always stood in attendence to assist his master in public. In the matter of courtesy to women, however, the master insisted on taking care of amenities himself, and he xx always kept a little baton about his person so that with the approach of a lady he could raise his hat by himself, using the little baton to get his hat off his head and back on again. "And that's what we worship as our noble ancestors", Lyle stilletteed.

Somehow we get around to something that happened in New Orleans when Aunt Cammie was visiting there. It seems that Carolyn Corman borrowed her sisters car and drove Aunt Cammie, Mister, some bag and one other person to New Orleans to be guests of Lyle during Mardi Gras. While in town, Carolyn saw a picture advertised that she wanted to see so she dragged the rest with her to the show., parking her car near the theatre. When they came out the car was gone. They reported it to the police. They couldn't do much about it. So they got another car. Later they got rid of the extra bag, picked up Lyle and started for Melrose.. Somewhner along the route they were forced to buy another car. Finally, within 30 miles of home and late at night, the car went over an embankment, spilling all of them and pinning sister under what was left of the thing. Mister was taken to a hospital where Aunt Cammie staied with her for several days. Lyle and Carolyn staid at a hotel the first night, but Carolyn insisted on staying the rest of the time with Aunt Cammie at the hospital. They they had to buy another car to get home in for otherwise Carry's sister would still be without one if they didn't bring something along to take the place of the one they borrowed. And Aunt Cammie's remark to this tale was:"Now, really, Francois, you know that Carolyn Corman is extraordinary."

Then there was the story of Philadelphia Melan, the beautiful Louisiana belle who had been a friend of Leudivna, Aunt Cammie's mother before the war. After Leudivina had returned to Shaddy Grove on Bayou Lafourche after spending four years away from home in a North Carolina finishing school at Winston Salem, and her grand tour several of her girl friends in the neighborhood of Lafrouche visited h her,--and visits in these days lasted for years, sometimes. All the belles were attractive, but Philadelphia was the fairest of all, with a marveleus white complexion and marveleus black hair which was "so long she could sit on it".

Nov. 25th,- Sat. - cont.

It was expected that Philadelphia would make a brilliant marriage for all the local beaux revolved about the orbit of Philadelphia with unceasing enthusiasm. But the war came while the young ladies were still visiting Leudivina, and one after another of the youths went away to war. No suiters had been accepted by any of the belles, but occasionally a soldier would return home on leave and usually a simple nuptials was celebrated. But Philadelphia continued to delay. Finally one of the quietest and most effacive of all her suiters came back for a day, Philadelphia married him and he went away again. The house party went on as before with lovely organdie and tulle dresses giving way to calico and homespun and Philadelphia growing more beautiful and more sad as her husband pursued his battles for the Confederacy and for Philadelphia.

One warm afternoon shortly before supper, Philadelphia excused herself and leaving her firends on the gallery, went up stairs. Supper time came and she failed to return. Miss Leudivina went upstair and receiving no response to her knock at Philadelp ia's door, she opened it and to her horror, found Philadelphia, naked, her beauti ful white body lying on the bed, her jet black hair hanging over the side and coiled in ringlets b neath her head on the white matting. A wash bowl was beside the bed and a towel. Philadelphia had obviously died of heart trouble or heart brake, as you please. And as this is all there is to the story, it must be admitted that there is not much point for its telling, but somehow the name Philadelphia is so unique that it must stick in the mind and so occupy a place which otherwise might have been occupied by a more interesting tale.

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Nov 25th,--Sat. continued.

Supper was a gay affair with good talk revolving primarily around Louisiana, past and present. There was much to do about the famous Mrs. Hart who had flourished in ante-bellum days, both in Natchez and in Bayou Lafourche. Welthy in her own right, she had married wealth from her first husband and married wealth again in her second. There was nothing special about Mrs. Hart and her ponderous passage across the stage of 19th century social life, except, possibly, that she was probably the largest woman from point of view of circumference that the sheuth-west had ever known. Her carriages were especially built to suit her figure and she always wore silk so that she could slide in and out of things more easily. Her plantation home was near Leudivina's, and they visited back and forth. Leudivina wedding was an event in Bayou Lafourche inview of the importance of her family and the popularity of the bride. Mrs. Hart had joined in many of the pre-nuptial entertaiments, and had sent many flowers before the ceremony, having gathered them herself from her own garden, making the tour of the roses hedges in one of her especially constructed carriages, and without moving from her position in the coach, selected the flowers and cut them hereself with her own daintily mitted hand.

When most of the guests had arrived at Lady Grove for the wedding ceremony, Mrs. Hart swirled up to a stop in front of the great portiece and slide on silk out of herx victoria, and turning to Leudivina's father and mother who were receiving thundered:"Whoever in the world is it that Miss Leudivina is going to Marry?".

The assembled guests and the bridegroom smiled indulgently, for everyone knew that Mrs. Hart had been acquainted with the groom for years. She met him a few years later when as head of that Parrish in charge of requaintshening horses for the Confederacy, he called on Mrs. Hart and after exchanging amenities, explained his painful duty. Mrs. Hart broke down and wept, saying that it would be better for him to take her right hand than to deprive her of her splendid pair of bays, as they provided the only means she had for getting anywhere beyond her front gallery. Courtliness triumphed ov over mere exegencies of war, and the young officer bowed before her pleas, leaving the bays and taking mules instead. A little later the Yankee's arrived and the bays were pressed into service to keep the South save for the Union.

As conversation ran along, time came for coffee and a new maid appeared in the place of Elmer. Bearing a silver tray and the demi-tasses, came this smartly gowned servant with a striking Merry Widow hat to complete the constume. It was Frank, done up to surprise Miss Lebian and Mr. Lyle, and this antic gave just the probper tone to this characterisic plantation supper, for here one had enjoyed the excelent foods, the easy conversation and story telling, and then that element of negro childish play, which could come to the surface unexpectedly, be appreciated for its worth by everyone present,--and most particularly to the delight of the colored people still in the house at that hour,--and somehow knit everyone together in a bond of goodwill that probably couldn't be duplicated anywhere else in the world.

Nov. 26th - Sunday.

Returnin to my maisonette around three, after a long night of conversation and highballs at Lyle, I was glad to sleep long. But when Frank came with early coffee and to lay the fire, I asked for breakfast at the usual hour, since I wanted to be up early to go to the station with Lyle.

Robina and I drove him to Berry to get the New Orleans train, but conversation was a little forced since Lyle had had an attack of illness just before train-time and we all felt concerned since last winter's operation doesn't seem to have been finished completely up to this late date.

After Robina and I said good bye, we drove for a bit around Isle Brevelle, returning home in time forxmmx mid-morning coffee which we had in my maisonette, Aunt Jammie joining us until little Jammie and family arrived.

Dinner at noone, and most of the "in-laws" present as well as most of the family now in Louisiana.

After tea, I spent a pleasant half hour looking through some of Lyle's books in his xxxxx cabin. As I was leaving, I met Frank who was bringing me an opossum to see. The bull dog, Snow, had caught it in the font garden and killed it. I was surpsed at the fox-like shape of its head, the thickness and length of its fur, and the ivory like appearance of its feet and the end of its rat-like tail, beautifully curved at the end so that the animal could suspend itself from a limb to sleep.

After supper we gathered in Aunt Jammie's room and found much interest and merriment in an old diary, written by an old maid,--not too old, I think, named McGruder, who lived in 1845 near Washington, Miss., not far from Natchez. I think I have already recorded the line which much xxxxxx amused me; "We had intended to go to church this morning but gave up the idea as Uncle had other business to attend to,--the overseer having gone on a drunken frolic".

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Nov. 27th, - Monday.

Up early to a rosy dawn, and after breakfast, rode for a little way toward Montrose with Sabina who was returning to Shreveport.

Walked back home, and did some mail which was rather past due until dinner. In the afternoon Aunt Tammie was busy with the gardners, and so I decided to walk over to see Seline on Cain River, around the loop in the river from Melrose.

It was a nice sunny day but the wind was a little fresh. I found Seline sitting by her open hearth, sharing the blaze with three cats and a half dozen chickens who seemed satisfied to be inside away from the breeze.

We talked for a while about local happenings of her girlhood on Cain River. As in previous visits, she swished the chickens away when they got to peering too closely into her pots on the hearth. Occasionally a chicken would fly up on the foot-board of the bed which stood in the corner. I couldn't reconcile these roosting chickens with the immaculate appearance of the coverlet. Seline herself wore an old blue bandana handerchief over her head, and once during our conversation a chicken flew up and sat on top until Seline, after a moment or two, gently brushed it aside.

Her nephew, Edward came in while we were chatting,--a nice looking mulatto youth of some 17 summers, who lives with Seline. She spoke to him in French, saying that she wanted to send some chickens to Aunt Tammie and would he get a bag for her to put them in. At the same time she asked me if I had come on foot and if I would mind bringing the chickens to Aunt Tammie. She walked out into her front yard, picked up three with one graceful gesture, and while Edward slit three holes in the bottom of the bag, Seline inserted the chickens, putxxiix pulling the head of each through one of the slits, and then tieing the bag securely, presented me this squawking "bouquet" of birds for the Mistress of Melrose.

As an exchange courtesy, I presented Seline with the medecine the Madam had sent her, giving elaborate instructions as to how and when it should be taken.. One has to be rather careful in giving such things to people of color who have faith in one, for they re likely to take anything that one recommends, and unless explicit instructions are given, the medecine is likely to be put to some unexpected use. I remember that someone once gave Seline some linament to rub on her leg for rheumatism, but neglected to describe how the liquid should be applied. It came as something of a shock soon after when Seline announced that she had taken one entire bottle and wondered if she should continue the treatment. She had been taking a tablespoonful before breakfast and after supper.

Heavily laden with chickens,, I chatted for a while with Aunt Tammie before supper, and afterward retired early.

Nov. 28th - Tuesday.

Up early and several batches of mail out of the way before breakfast.

Aunt Tammie came over for mid-morning coffee and we talked plantation. We spent a good part of an hour talking about Washington, Mississippi and houses we like in that region. Propinquity is one of the nice older houses in that remarkable region of ante-bellum homes which has survived. A couple of distinguished people have lived there but perhaps the most certain to intrigue the writers of romance in days to come is the famous Mrs. Young.

A daughter of the owner of Propinquity, Miss Young had married at 16 when her youthful husband was 40.

Being wealthy, she assisted him in fitting out some three hundred men in an expidition that would conquer that vast, disputed territory which was later to be known as Texas. I suppose the doings of Aaron Burr in Natchez a few years before had inspired this young couple on this high-road to power.

And so Mr. and Mrs. Young and their little army started out for the Texas Territory, and succeed in taking over a large section of it, with their headquarters at a stout little fort which they built on the Gulf.. At the same time that Young was subduing certain regions in Texas, Xrmx Iturbie, a bold Mexican or Spanish leader, was carrying out simil r operations against the Vice-roy's government. Iturbie accordingly sent an emissary to Young, pointing out that if they should combine their forces, they could the more readily subdue the ent ire country and so the sooner arrive at independent power which they could then divide.

In good faith, Young accepted the offer of further consultation, and taking most of his men with him, he said goodby to his wife whom he left at the fort with a guard of 75 men, their infant son, bout a year old and one colored maid, 12 years old. He confided his plans of divided Empire to her, advising her to await his return to the fort which would be within a short time.

But he never return, for Iturbie had him assissinated as soon as her reached his camp.

At the fort, Mrs. Young waited for her husband's r turn. Her patience bridged the space of several weeks, but the garrison soon became restive, and shortly afterwards declared that they were returning to Natchez. But Mrs. Young decided to remain true to her husband s request that she await his return, and so she and her little child and the young negress, remained as the only living souls in the fort.

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The fort iself was surrounded by wandering Indians and lawless Mexicans but this danger never daunted Mrs. Young. Every morning at dawn, she fired the morning salute and ran up the American flag, and every evening, she rang the flag down and fired the evening salute. As the weeks lengthened in months, food became short, but clams and oysters were plentiful hard by the fort on the shore, and these were the main subsistence except for an occasional bird that might fly over the fort and be felled by Mrs. Young's musket. After a little over a year, a Yankee force under Austin, I believe, passed through this territory, and seeing a flags flying from the fort, took it to be Lafitte, the Pirate, and the co mander sent an emissary to establish the identity of the troups holding the place. He was stunned when he learned that the garrison during the past year had consisted of one woman, a year old baby and a little colored girl.

Mrs. Young, on learning of her husband's death, returned to Natchez, and her grand-daughter now lives at Propinquity.

The mail was good, coming like a delicous desert after dinner, and we sat in the mid-day sun on the front gallery and waded through the letters, magazines and books which had arrived in the post.

After coffee, we fussed around in the garden where Sam Brown, Re Regis and a half dozen others were preparing the fertilizers and clipping the bushes in antiepation of "winter".

After supper we read from an unpublished translation of of a French visiter's years in Louisiana, the paper having been sent to Aunt Sammie from the files of L. S. U. There was much about a murder story of a certain Madame St. Julien, but altogether the paper was rather dull.

We talked plantation some, too, and at first I had thought I would wait until little Sammie had returned from Shreveport. Aunt Sammie had asked her to bring back her old friend, Mrs. Nellie Regan, whom Aunt Sammie has asked to come down to stay to be my reader. This is going to be swell.

Nov. 29th --Wednesday.

Up early, bathed and shaved before Frank came with my morning coffee. I didn t wait for breakfast but started out before seven to walk to Montrose on my way to Natchitoches, 20 miles away.

The sun wasn't up above the horizon, and the faded orange-rose clouds reflected in Cain River as I passed suggested a day that might hold the promise of something other than sunshine.

While waiting for the bus, an old resident of the neighborhood a Mr. Pease, new road commissioner, or something of the sort, stopped and gave me a ride part way to town. After spending a little time in Natchitoches, I started back, having gotten a ride with a Mr. Cooper who seems to be a portly politician who has lived in these parts only since 1920 whence he appeared from the Ozaketas.

I walked back from Cypress, about 8 miles, and arrived just in time for dinner,--noon, of course. Miss Nellie was present as was Mr. Bachelier, a man who had come from Paris to Cloutierville, a number of years ago. He is Aunt Sammie s expert on clipping and pruning and whatnot..

After dinner, Miss Nellie and I ran through the Mississippi State Historical volumes in the libaray and found other volumes that would keep us busy for a while. We read in the afternoon and evening.

And so early to bed.

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Nov. 30th. - Thursday.

Thanksgiving No. 2, what with half the states having celebrated last week and the other half today.

Up early with a good brisk walk behind me before bath and breakfast.

Miss Nellie read much this morning from Aunt Cammie's scrap books on Natchez.

Dinner was more heavily attended today since some of the people here today happenxxx to be residents of Texas, and Texas celebrates Thanksgiving today

In the after noon, Miss Nellie and I alternated between the library and my maisonette, browsing for data on 1825 Natchez. After tea, I took a turn in the garden and made a hurried survey of the property in back of the African House where the swan lake will be. After the lake is completed there must be a little mill of some kind, and if possible a little mound with a calssic temple on it for a map room.

Supper early and reading afterwards in Aunt Cammie's room. There was much interest in the McGruder Diary which Aunt Cammie rescued from I know not where,---rs. Moore in Natchez, probably, as the scene of the Diary is in Washington, five miles east of Natchez. The writer was an old maid who eeked out an existence in living with well-fortitfied relations. The marvel of the diary is the picture of perpetual industry with which she paints the plantation as buzzing from morning 'til night. It would be good required reading for those who are still under the impression that qlllk one had to do in ante-bellum days was to buy a plantation, and then ffor the rest of your life sit on the front gallery, sip mint julips and let the slaves make fortunes in cotton or sugar for you.

One line of the diary I like quite a lot: We didn't get to church as Uncle Gunbar had to attendx to matters at home " the overseer having gone on a drunken frolic".

December 1st, - Friday.

Up and abroad before the moon was down, for a little turn in the garden to enjoy this warm soft southern night.
Back to my little maisonette before dawning, shower and shave and a gay blaze on my hearth when Frank arrived with my coffee.

Caught up a bit on some of my correspondence which has gotten out of hand during the past week, and a nice Miss Nellie came over to read from B.L.C Wailes and the Mississippi Guide. We uncovered a lot of particulars regading Clouster which pleased me no end.

Dinner was gay with conversation and the introduction of an element somewhat disturbing from the ranks of the servants. Aunt Cammie often enjoys a slice of white bakery bread, as opposed to the corn bread and buiscuists which the rest of the guests usually enjoy. As no white bread appeared on the table, Aunt Cammie asked Elmer to bring some. Elmer looked a little confused and stammered that there was none, Frank having forgotten to bring some from the store. Aunt Cammie let that pass, knowing full well that something had gone awray.

After dinner she called Elmer, saying that there was no reason why there should not have been white bread on the table, that it was Elmer's business to see to it that white bread should be in the house. Elmer again said that Frank had forgotten to get any from the store, to which Aunt Cammie said that was no excuse, since it was Elmer's business to see that bread was provided. Frank then volenteered that he hadn't forgotten to get bread, in fact there had been an adequate supply of bread in the pantry that morning. That remark, of course, blew the lid off, since it was evident that something had happened in the pantry which was out of order.

Aunt Cammie then assembled Sam Brown, and his assistant, Regis who are gardeners. They were marched into the kitchen where Elmer, the cook, was doing dishes. Frank was there also as was Rita, Aunt Cammie's maid, who incidentally is Regins' daughter. Aunt Cammie laid down the law to all of them regarding stealing food from the pantry, saying that she knew perfectly well who took the bread and the head-cheese, and that the culprit had better come to her and confess. All five persons concerned seemed greatly disturbed, but Sam Brown, doubly so, for he is a darkie who just thrives on excitement and an opportunity to express his coherence at any infraction of plantation law.

Me and Elmer are negro and the other three are mulatto and there is no love lost between them. After the first act of this comedy was over, Frank stood by, declaring that he didn't know who had taken the food, but saying he was sure that it wasn't Elmer. Frank is a grand person, torn between a sense of loyalty to Aunt Cammie, a desire to protect the innocent, as Elmer seemed to be, and yet filled with terror at the thought of reporting the guilty, since the culprit might cast a spell on him and as he passed by their house at night, he might be made a cripple and never walkxx again, because of the spell them might place on him.

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Dec. 1st. - Friday.

After some conversation with Aunt Sammie, Frank indicated without naming anyone, that when Elmer was out of the kitchen this morning, Rita took the bread, together with the head-cheese, and passed it out to her father, Regis. Aunt Sammie promised him that she wouldn't ever mention anyone's name in subsequent decisions turning upon this information.

One sees in this episode an good example of complications arising from paternal operation of the plantation.

Regis lives in a cabin on the plantation and has, up to now, nine children, including Rita, who is Aunt Sammie's maid. Being effecient and well trained, Rita relieves Aunt Sammie of lots of duties. Regis has been guilty of conniving with Rita in the matter of food once before. If Aunt Sammie were to fire one, probably both would leave. If Regis were shifted from his job as Melrose gardener to work on the plantation proper, Rita would probably quit her job, too, so Aunt Sammie is bound to loose a maid anyway, and of course it takes considerable time to find another and to train her,--what with all the complications of family and whatnot. And then, of course, there is the further consideration,--what will happen to Regis and his family of nine off-spring if he should quit his job in a huff and leave Melrose. Strictly speaking, of course, it is no concern of Melrose what happens after he quits the place, and yet on cannot help but give the matter more consideration than Regis probably would as to where they would go to get another job.

It must be borne in mind, too, that the question of raiding the icebox is not the question in point. It is all that is likely to follow in its train if the tendency isn't checked at this point.

The more one contemplates the status of the negro and the mulatto, the economic trough from which it would appear they either will not or cannot alter, and all the thousand and one considerations that have to go into any comprehensive review of the problem, it would almost seem to lead one back to the remark that Agnes her ra tired peasant make: It was at the close of day, and near the end of the fireld which he had been ploughing with his worn-out horse. A few more furrows still needed to be turned. The peasant rested for a moment at the end of a furrow, trying to decide if he should force the horse on to the completion of the work that evening. Deciding that the work should be finished, he said as if in confidence to his exhausted animal: "I tell you the truth, I know you have worked enough for today and I feel sorry for you, but you've got to finish this job. Besides, God damn you, you hadn't out to be a horse".

Dec. 2nd - Saturday.

Another beautiful day, warm and sunny.

I awoke about four, thinking I would add some wood to the embers on my hearth. On stepping onto the gallery, however, I gave up the idea of a glowing grate since the moon had made such a beautiful silvery-day out of doors. And so I took a short tour o the garden, enchanted with the calm and peace, puncutuated with the occasional crow of a rooster anticipating the dawn.

Uncle WhiteFoot joined me, mewing in protest at the exercise in which he had not been invited to join but in which he apparantly thought he should participate.

Back home again, both of us snuggled into bed until Frank arrived a little after six with coffee.

Miss Nellie came over about nine to read with me, Aunt Sammie joining us for 10 o'clock coffee.

Dinner at noon with reading afterward until four when Miss Nellie's two daughters arrived for a visit with their mother. Aunt Sammie and I fiddled in the front garden for a while, and supper came at five.

Afterward we held our usual soiree in Aunt Sammie's room, reading more from the McGruder Diary and talking plantation.

We also read some of Aunt Sammie's grandfather's Diary for the year 1860 in which he spoke much of the completion of his mansion on Cors Bete, his visit to New Orleans to purchase certain furnishings for the new house, including eleven four poster beds. The bedrooms in the house were thirty feet square so that they could easily hold four of these beds for the boys, as subsequently happened when the latter refused to sleep together.

Aunt Sammie had some stories covering her own childhood. Aunt Julie was an old slave who remained with the Erwins after the war. She gave much attention to Aunt Sammie and her little brother when they were small. Once little brother wanted to play with a chicken which at the moment was confined in a small coop with little chicks. Brother lifted up the coop to capture the hen, but after catching her, he let the coop drop, and a half dozen little baby chicks were killed. Aunt Julie was ripping mad, and to punish brother, she tied the setting hen to brother's leg. This made little Carmelite mad and she vainly tried to approach her brother to free his leg, but he jumped up and down at such a great rate that the chicken, in turn, grew furious, and so the would-be rescurer didn't dare get close enough to child and chicken to effect a release.

Returned to my maisonette by nine and so to bed.

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Dec. 3rd. - Sunday.

~nother rare day like these of June in ~ew ~ngland.

Up early and breakfast and xm a goodly b tch of mail out of the way before nine when Miss Nellie came over to read scrapbooks and B.L.C. Wailes until ten. ~unt ~ammie joined us for coffee, and after a pleasant half hour talking plantation, we went back to reading until dinner at noon. ~ostly family present except three or our people including Charles ~azusette from down Little River way.

~xplored the old ~frican Washhouse, build along the lines of the big xrxx ~frican house, walked along Cain River for a bit, home for another shower and nap when ~r. brought me a big piece of pie and a glass of milk. This pretty successfully killed supper at five.

When the ~loutiers ha left, we read old letters from people of ~ote ~oyeuxe, which adjoins Melrose hard by. There were a couple of remarkable epistles by Aunt Neuppi to her son, and several from Fanon ~ruhdhomme and ~ourchier dated about 1850 which I liked best.

I came home about nine to listen to ~rson ~ells and so to bed.

December 4th - ~onday.

Up and abroad ab dawn, walking three miles to Montrose and thence into oblivion until nine thirty when I returned to ~elrose.

~unt ~ammie had gone to visit old aristocratic Madame ~ubert-~esque to whom she is always sending or taking food and medecine and ~eaven knows what. Madame ~ubert-~esque doesn't know it, but the Henry's have an edge on what remains of the old mulattoes property. Miss Cammie has assured the old lady that she will always have a home so long as she lives. ~ learned the other day that once when Madame Aubert-~esque was gravely ill, Aunt ~ammie telegraphed to a mulatto daughter of La ~esque in ~ew ~rleans, acquainting the off-spring with her mothers condition, but the wretch never even acknowledged the message. Aunt ~ammie says that the blacks are inclined to be kinder to their relatives than the mulattoes. "Below the lower nobility begin the higher animals".....

But ~ hadn't found ~unt ~ammie until noon, and being back here at ninethirsty or ten, ~ wandered about the gardens a bit, enjoying my mid-morning coffee in the gorgeous summer sunshine and examining the rose situation to see if I would be likely to find myself a bouquet.

I got about as far as the bindery cottage, and going in, found ~iss ~ellie sorting ~achiteches papers. ~t seems that ~unt ~ammie has quite a collection of these during recent years, having a better file than the publishers themselves, since some of theirs were recently burned in a fire that destroyed the plant.

I learned today, too, that aside from the scrapbooks on ~ouisiana Plantations, curious murder stories, like the Ceast ~astle or the ~uth ~udd affair, not to mention the Natchez books, ~unt ~ammie keeps one on of obituaries covering prominent people in this section of the ~outh ~est. She finds that obituaries usually give more concise information on the doings of departed personages than oceans of eulogies and sketches of appreciation, vituperation or editorials.

In the ~fternoon, Miss ~ellie read to me from the Sydner'sB.L.C. WAILES. I am floored at the marvelous source book this has turned out to be, nor shall ~ ever cease to wonder at the amazing collection of outstanding intellectuals that peopled the Natchez-~ashington, Miss., region in the first half of the 19th century. New England may have had a flowering but "Ole" Miss had an explosion in the wilderness.

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Dec. 5th, - Tuesday.

Uncle Whit feet scratched on my door at four and upon opening for him I found thenight soft and warm and much to delectable to go back to sleep. And so I dressed hurriedly and walked to Cain River bridge and sat for an hour, watching the stars blink on the surface of the placid waters, and listening to the myriad sounds of the night. Aside from the antiphinal crowing of chanteclers from hidden roosting places round the blue black horizon, there were the buzz of insects and the bass of the frogs,--surely an exceptional season to add or continue such orchestration this late in the winter,-- and in a little cove on the far side of the bridge near where Phemies house used to stand, a flock of ducks werebusling about and occasionaly quacking at each other. How peaceful and quiet the plantation is at this hour, and yet how audible is the silence. Somehow night never seemed more like a great spangled curtain of powder blue velvet, hanging in sumptous folds to conceal the day, yet somehow inadequate in its effort to hush the muffled voices of a restive legion of birds and insects, which, for the countryside maintain a rythm as measured as the breathing of man and animal unmindful of the coming day.

Back home before the moon was down, a stimulating shower and a cigartette before the glowing heart where logs were giving back the sunshine they had stored up, and the yellow flames were for decoration and friendship but not for heat.

Breakfast about seven, and then to the mail, with Miss Nellie coming over at nine, and so on with reading from Sydner's Wailes until noon.

Dinner and the postman and only a couple of letters,--but these were all that one could wish for since they came from those I love. There was a book list, too, and among other items a 2 volumes Uncle Tom's Cabin, illustrated, published the first year the edition came out, and a volume which we shall try to acquire for the library,--Fletcher of Louisiana, being the author, and the volume entitled SLAVERY. It was published in Natchez, I believe in 1852. This should make interestinfterresting reading with Miss Nellie. Per Sydner, I wonder why he didn't entitle his volume THE FOLWERING OF THE SOUTHWEST,--what with all the particulrs he has on that extraordinary coterie of better minds that flourished around Natchez and Washington, Miss., during the first half of the 19th century. I must read that Ingraham book her speaks of,-- a Yankee views the South West. I was impressed by his account of the road from Woodville to Natchez in the 40(s being dotted with plantations homes, the owner of which was estimated to be worth from one hundred thousand to ten million dollars. With all the s ere the country used to set on the dollar as an index of something or other, it is curious no one ever seemed to have heard of this Elderado of cotton turned to gold.

Dec. 6th - Wednesday.

Another beautiful summer's day. The roses are still blooming and the daffodills are in bud. The Sweet Olive in my door set is like Araby in concentration. I walked a bit on the gallery before dawn, inhaling the marveleus perfume until that sill, Felice dog, Penn romped up and well nigh pushed me overboard with his clumsy affection.

Miss Nellie came over shortly after breakfast to read, while Aunt Tammie busied herself on the otherside of the house in the front garden. At ten, Rita arrived with morning coffee, bearing a tray of seven cups, so I gathered we were to have guests.

Celest arrived immediately from her house nearby and she was followed by Aunt Tammie with three guests in tow,--a Mrs. Weiss from Natchitoches, a Mr. McCullough and a Mr. Robinson, the latter being very nice, and I guess both of them clergymen.

We had a pleasant hours chat, concentrating much on Louisiana Plantations on the East bank of the Mississippi, and certain aspects of Kentucky where Mr. Robinson hails from I believe. He has promised to see if he can get me a copy of the Architectural Review devoted to Bardstown which I am very anxious to turn through.

I was delighted with the qulity of Mrs. Weiss's voice. It seems she is an old friend of Xxxx Aunt Tammie who has known her ever so long. The poor woman has a daughter who is a great source of care and sorrow, being a victim of arrested mental developement. I believe she lives with her son in Natchitoches, Mr. Weiss having died a number of years ago. During his last illness, the Weiss house burned, but fortunately many of the furnishings were saved. As the family was under a fixxx financial strain at the time, Aunt Tammie sent a plantation truck up to Natchitoches to assist in the cartage of the household goods. The black driver and helper were promptly arrested when they arrived to carry out their instructions as given by Aunt Tammie. Scared half to death, they somehow got out of the toils of the law and hot-footed it back to Melrose and related their xperiences. It seems that one can't do business in Natchitoches with a truck without a license, and thus the frustration of attempted charity in a time of strain.

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Among the colloquilisms of this section of Louisiana, One that has struck me as being quite distinctive is the use of the word "afternoon". In other localities I have always thought of afternoon as being some uncertain hour between twelve or one o'clock noon and running through to five or six o'clock, to be followed by evening that begins about sun down and continues possibly to eight or nine o'clock. The unusual thing about afternoon in this locality, however, is that it simply doesn't exist. It's morning up until noon, and from that point on it is evening. And so it is that if one received the evening mail, it is from the postman who arrives about a quarter of one, and if one promises to come for afternoon coffee at two o'clock, ~~with~~ it will be coming over this evening for coffee. I haven't yet discovered just when night sets in, although I assume that it starts sometime after dark, since, as Aunt Tammie remarks, when the clock points to 8 P. M. at Melrose, one might as well consider it midnight.

After supper we looked at some old paintings of houses associated with Aunt Tammie's mother. There was the huge log house which Miss Eudivina's father had built in Bayou Lafourche when he left his Plantation, Peachgrove, in Nashville, and began carving out a largeer estate in Louisiana. Although the house was large, the family did include 15 children, and I suppose accounts for his having build his mansion later with bedrooms 30 ft. square, so that, as he jocularly remarked, he could get out of bed without stepping of a half dozen children.

Then there was the picture of the house where Aunt Tammie was born. It was in New Orleans, I believe, and one wing had been added to the house a short time before little Carmelite made her bow, by having a grand "Figioniere" moved from a short distance away to ~~the~~ for an intregal part of the building. It was in this wing that Aunt Tammie was born, and so it is that we tease her about being born in a pigeon house.

Afterwards we sat long before the Franklin Stove and chatted and laughed about idiocyracies of people we knew in Natchez, reading the Natchez Democrat for morsels of merryment. In the social news, for example, there was an account of a Fox Hunt, with a banquet afterwards, including a memorial to the late Duncan Miner. The combination is rather unique to begin with, and exceptionally so, when one stops to realize that he of all people set the town to rocking by the leading role he played in the scandalous affair known as The Goat Castle Murder Case.

And so home and a little radio, and to sleep.

Dec. 7th - Thursday.

Another georgeous day, warm as a June day in New England.

After breakfast, I ran over to the big house, and found Aunt Tammie standing in the middle of her bedroom, dressed in a stunning gown, with Miss Nellie on her knees sewing up the hem. I told Aunt Tammie I wish she would step at some local photographer and watch the birdie for a moment, but I guess that is about impossible to hope for. At nine she left ~~me~~ for South Louisiana, Fayette, I believe, via Alexandria.

Miss Nellie and I plunged into our reading and kept steadily at it until noon.

Dinner seemed unlike a Melrose dinner without the Madam. Mr. McKnight from Natchitoches was the only guest, and no one lingered long at the board.

In the afternoon Miss Nellie and I continued our reading, with much about Marschalk, the first printer of Mississippi and his concern over the freeing of Col. Foster's african slave-prince. I should sometime like to read the Niles Diary from which we ran across many quotations. It is astonishing how many details he included in that document, and how frequently one runs across places or incidents with which one is familiar. For instance there is a good account in the diary of an excellent dinner and musical given by Gerard Brandon,--which took place, I assume, at Windy Hill Manor. How often Miss Elizabeth probably lives over these dinners in her imagination as Windy Hill Manor slowly decays about her ears these days. And there was another note by Niles about going to the races in Mississippi, seeing the famous Lecompt or Decomte horse run. The Lecomte's, of course, were the opulent planters whose vast acreage passed to the Hertzog's,--being located just down the road from Melrose. With all the modern contraptions that go into moving a racehorse from track today,--everything it would seem from special cars to cotton-batting, it would be interesting to know how racehorses were transported in the first half of the 19th century when roads were notoriously torturous for human beings. I suppose it is about 250 miles from the Lecomte-Hertzog plantation to Natchez, and some of the Lecomte horses ran in the Kentucky Derby, one of them bringing back the trophy, and Churchill Downs must be 6 or 7 hundred miles from here.

We supped early, and Aunt Tammie still being in the big road, we departed to our separate maisonettes to get caught up on correspondence.

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Dec. 8th.--Friday.

A heavy fog hung over the plantation when I awoke a little before six. A little before seven I had gone through my shower and black coffee, and was marching toward the big road, the water particles in the air moistening my face as I walked along. The sun was struggling heavily through the curtains of fog, and within half anhour had triumphed, with the countryside for twenty miles looking as fresh as a new washed Fragonard.

It was hot when I turned toward home where I arrived about ten. I passed by the kitchen for a cup of coffee, finding Elmer looking a little under the weather from too much fasting. She had better stop reducing so violently or we shall all be sitting at an empty board.

Aunt Cammie was somewhere in the gardens and I couldn't find her, so I sought out Miss Nellie in the bindery where she was sorting Natchitoches newspapers before a decorative fire on the hearth that was enclosed by curious screened gates that Aunt Cammie had found in some forgotten plantation house that has long since crumbled into decay.

After a little chat with Miss Nellie, I went on to my little maisonnet, finding Fintzie, the dachund, sitting before the screen-door, which plainly told me that the Madam must be within. I found her in my bathroom, filling a vase with water for a beautiful bouquet of narcissus which she had picked for me while on her morning tour.

We talked for a while about her trip of yesterday to south Louisiana to call on an old friend who will not recover.

In south Louisiana, because of this summer like weather we are having, the flowering shrubs, japonicas and whatnot or all in bloom and it would seem that if a cold snap doesn't come we are likely to have July weather by January this year.

After dinner we went through the mail which included a welcomed green slip for me and some copies of Plaisir de France which I sat down with on a bench under the great live oak and turned through for sheer contentment. In the afternoon, Miss Nellie and I read more from the Wailes Diary until nearly five. Then after a short walk, I joined the rest at dinner.

Afterwards, Miss Nellie and her sister, Miss Annie, who had arrived about supper time, went their several ways while Aunt Cammie and I talked for a couple of hours before her fire. I had eaten so much at dinner that I was sleepy,--particularly the wild duck which Dan had shot at some watering place nearby. Hence no radio but just an evening of slumber.

Dec. 9th - Saturday.

Up and abroad with the sun,--gloriously gold, with the promise of a continued endless Indian Summer,--fresh in the evening and pleasantly warm during the day.

Before breakfast, I made a little tour of the gardens, discovering a beautiful red rose for myself in the front gardens and a marvelous hedge of white narcissus in Lyle's white garden. I sat for a while by the fence where a wicket is to be cut that will eventually give in upon our swamp lake which is yet to be gouged out of the cotton patch and a spirit engendered into it with a pair of beautiful majestic white birds.

I found old Uncle Whitefeet sitting before my door on my return, awaiting me and the opportunity to share my breakfast before my cheery hearth. He limped appreciably and wanted to be babied, so he sat on my lap but was in too much pain to hum his little good morning tune with which he always serenades me while awaiting Frank's arrival. I couldn't find any evidence of his pain, but Frank found he had broken the skin a bit above his right paw, and Frank could fix it up with some medecine. It was good for the heart to see how kindly and how gently Frank handled Uncle Whitefeet, and how soothingly he talked to him uninterruptedly while he fussed with his injured paw. Frank is a lovable mulatto, imbued with a soul that spreads calm and peace, coupled with those faithful qualities and efficiencies that made the old darkies of ante-bellum days the prize of any great house that could not have been so beautiful and filled with amenities if it hadn't been for those like Frank.

Miss Nellie came over at 10 and read,--finishing the Wailes book and Louise Butler's account of the life of a Southern Planter, which had appeared in the Mississippi Historical Review. Although she didn't mention it in the article, she has told me that this is not an imaginative pic ture of a composite Southern planter, but an actual account of the Mercer family, living at Laural Hill, Natchez. As I recall, Mrs. Mercer was a cousin or an Aunt of Miss Louise. At Laural Hill,--as at so many other plantations in that fabulous area and era, there was the Big House. There was the plantation church where the planter's family and the slaves worshipped. There was the pasters house, the Dr.'s house and the overseer's house, out-buildins such as the school, the wagon-house, the sotrage house, the smokehouse, etc, etc., and of course there were the negro cabins. Miss Louise has told me that the Mercers weren't especially rich as riches were counted in these days. His fortune was estimated at about five million. There were others whose accounts ran into twice that amount

I recall having seen in the home of a relative in Saint Francisville, in the home of one of Mrs. Mercer's daughters or grand daughters, a lovely oil of Mrs. Mercer and one of her daughter's, as painted by Benjamin West. The present ower of the

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Dec. 9th- cont.

if
picture is one of the purest essences of that sweetness which we often think of in relation to the careful training of the rare flowers which that faded culture produced. The painting itself is fast cracking and pealing away toward nothing, but even at this late date could be saved, if the poor lady who owns it weren't too poor to dream of staving off the obliteration. I suppose it is one of the few possession of a glorious past which she still possesses, and it would be a crime to separate her from this last vestage of a life that was so precious. It is a pity this Benjamin West has to be headed toward obliteration just as inevitably as the society that produced it, but who will give the hundred dollars required to restore this canvas, thus saving it for posterity? And if, to save it, by selling it to a collector or a gallery, who would take away from this gentle little old lady the last remaining symbol of the "vie delicieuse" which she lived and unfortunately had to see evaporate, leaving her in poverty?

Of the characters in this portrait, Miss Louise has told me much. Mrs Mercer in black taffeta is seated on the right, with her daughter, in white crepe standing beside her mother. The portrait of the daughter was painted posthumously, for she had died while in Paris at the age of 19. Her body was brought back to America, and someone told Miss Louise that he chanced to be on the bluffs of Natchez when the boat bearing Miss Mercer, came up the rive from New Orleans. From stem to stern it was draped inblack. Miss Louise still posses a few articles belong to this lovely girl, a yellow taffeta jacket, with smart pleats at the neck and the sleeves, caught at the seam by tiny pink and blue rose buds, and there remains a beautiful fan, --carved ivory with a lovely Fragonard-like scene painted across the upper part, and most unusual of all, gold work in fresco along the outter slat, and so contrived as to form a border for the little mirror half concealed in the design,--the only ante-bellum vanity case I ever saw. And then there still remins in Miss Louise's possession a magnificent golden comb, --some five or six inches of gentle curve, heavily studded with pearls, so that the gold prongs of this head decoration were push through the hair straight back from the forehead, the seed-pearls formed a sumptous diadem across Miss Mercers brow..

With the reading done for the day, we dined and sauntered through a leisurely afternoon, Robina arriving toward four o'clock, and joined me before my fire, both of us escaping the curious visitors who had called from time to time after the coffee hour and were inspecting the loom cottage and gardens. A nice chat after dinner and fairly early to bed.

December 10th - Sunday.

Up and about at dawn, with Frank coming shortly afterward with my breakfast, at which Uncle Whitefoot and I feasted on bacon and whatnot until eight.

Aunt Cammie came over at 8:15, and with Miss Nellie, she got Robina and me under way, for we were to be week-end guests of Miss Loui Louise at The Cottage near Saint Francisville.

An excellent day for traveling,--many gray clouds with occasional bursts of sun, and a temperature that was perfect.

Once in the big road, we headed toward Natchitoches, thence across the plains through the flat country, on to Winfield, and through the pine woods and oil fields whose derricks add a second forest to the uncut trees that spread to the horizon. We approached the Mississippi at Ferriday and a little further on we sighted the bridge emplacements behind the levy which will one day destroy the charm and seclusion of the formerly isolated and fabulous Natchez. For a little while, however, the ferry will be the only means of transporting one across to the other side, and this we took, experiencing the inevitable thrill of the sight ofthe storied bluffs, the evil atmosphere that fainly prevades scandalous old Ntchez-under-the- Hill, and above and beyond, Natchez herself.

It was noon and we dined at Burton's, hoping that we would see no one listed as "portioned Gentry", for it would be difficult to untangle one's self from the ensuing teas and cotails that would inevitably follow.

We accordingly hurried through the shrimp and chicken and the excellent rolls, and drove through town, deviating only to run past Homewood, so beautifully restored by the x Kingsley Swanns. Robina was particularly anxious to see this lovely home on two counts,-because she had not visited it for several years before its restoration and because she wanted to be able to give further details regarding its present status to freinds in Shrevepert,--the Davises,--whose relatives had built the place in the 1850's. Such infinite good taste has been expended on its interior, and such exquisite taste has been followed in landscaping the gardens that Homewood today stands as a monument of unexcelled beauty in a region that is unsurpassed in it beautiful and rematic character.

It would have been nice to run out to Washington to see the Wailes house and the little red church of which we have been reading during the past week, and to have slid over to Foster's Mount to see Mr. Crockett, but time was moving along, and so we headed south toward Woodville and Saint Francisville. Turning off the main highway at Bains, we entered the woods, driving for a half mile or so until reaching Alexander's Creek. The woods were quiet with the hush of evening, yet musical with the call of many a bird, the great barn owl dominating the chorus, with the lilt of the nightengale filling in the gaps. The woods themselves were delicious with a faint fragrance of sweet olive, tinctured with the pungent aroma of drying leaves.

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Dec. 10th - continued.

Crossing the Creek, we slowly mounted the long incline, which turns and runs parallel with the Creek which we could see through the foliage away below us. Reaching the top of the incline, we turned at right angles, before the mellowing picket fence,--its gates ajar, with the great live oaks, their silent, motionless banners, as though about to descend with the failing light and en rap The Cotta e in a gray-gauze curtain of night.

Miss Louise came out on the gallery, greeting us over the balustrade, as is her custom. She asked us to the rear gallery, where an extending wing forms with the opposing out buildings, a kind of forgotten court, secluded from the vast gardens that stretch away in front of the Cottage.

There were guests from New Orleans, and with these we chatted until those who had come up to hunt had returned with the birds they had shot. The evening was settling down like a powderpint cloud, and already two glittering planets had appeared in the Southern sky. We sat for half an hour, drinking a vaguely warm toddy, and with the second round accomplished, the guests departed for the Delta country, and Miss Robina and I were alone with Miss Louise and Mr. Bob.

As at Melrose, all the colored servants have Sunday evening off, and accordingly Mesdames Denholme and Butler beget themselves to the pantry and dinning room while Mr. Bob and I sat on the back gallery, listening to the variety of bird calls that sparkled from the folliage in the surrounding gardens as stars twinkled in the deepening blue.

The ringing of a little silver bell announced the hour of supper, zwhszszzzz served in the famous old Cottage dinning room, at a table surely 14 feet in length. The table is always maintained at this expansiveness even though as in the present only Robina, Mr. Bob and I were the limited trio to grace it. Miss Louise never dines at the table, prefering to sit in an armchair in the corner, conversing with the guests, and assuring them that she doesn't care to eat at the moment. She always eats by herself in the pantry or in her apartment on the sedcond floor. We ran through cold chicken, salads and a variety of side dishes, ending the repast with tea and a wonderful chocolate cake which Miss Louise had made herself. Conversation ran along at the same time, and afterwards there was much talk on plantation things, and a going over of family treasures which Miss Louise was kind enough to show for our delight,--wonderful desert service, including knives, forks, spoons and a great ladle,-- all of solid gold, with the Butler crest modestly hidden at a judicious place, wonderful old swords of the early Mississippi and Louisiana period, a compact but elegant toilet set in silver of ante-bellum dayswonderous seals and bucklets in silver from the old Gaillard family which had come to Louisiana in 1685, when the great Gaillard family was forced to quit their feudal fastnesses in Normandie by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Rare laces and regal satins of ante-bellum days, all this and a world besides, were piled high on the table, and with each Miss Louise could regale us with many a personal anecdote about her kin who had controled such vast plantation wealth through this Saint Francisville region, and up as far as Natchez 70 miles away.

Dec. 10th - continued.

One of Miss Louise's grandmothers had been Mrs. Mercer of Laural Hill Plantation near Natchez. One story she had to tell of her was, I believe, of the troublesome years during or after the War. One night while at dinner, an old Mammy whispered in Mrs. Mercer's ear while austensibly arranging a dish on the tabble:

"Run for your life, Missie", the old Mammy murmured in a muffled voice. "Don't stop a second, fo' they sure is gwine t' kill you right soon".

The butler appeared at that moment with the after-dinner coffee, and in normal, unexcited tone, the Mistress arose from the table, saying "Tom, have my carriage brought to the door right smart".

"But, Missy", the servant who was a party to the plot, remonstrated " You all'as has you coffee."

But he wilted under a second command from the Mistress and the carriage appeared, and Mrs. Mercer ordered ~~it~~ the coachman to drive at all speed to the ferry landing. The horses plunged through the twilight, reaching the bank just before the ferry pulled away, so that Mrs. Mercer stepped aboard just as it started to swing out into mid-stream. At that moment a howling mob of blacks swarmed down to the bank, armed with hoes and cudgels, enraged that their prey had escaped. With the racket they made, the Patrol turned out and the ring-leaders brought to justice on the spot. The ferry, meantime, had hovered just off shore, and when ~~the~~ order had been restored, Mrs. Mercer stepped back on the landing, and mounting her carrage, drove back to Laurel Hill, and in the quiet of her dining room, drank her evening coffee, as was her want.

There was a beautiful lace scarf,--priceless, I presume, since without knowing anything about lace, I couldn t fail to recognise its unusual delicasy and beauty. It had belonged to young Mrs. Steven Duncan, who lived at beautiful Auburn in Natchez, Auburn of the remarkable suspended staircase, and home of Mississippi's most wealthy cotton planter. Her sister lived at the Cottage near Saint Francisville, and she had decided to spend a little time at the Cottage, sending some of her personal effects before her, and herself driving down from Natchez by the famous Woodville Road. But the lovely Mistress of Auburn never did arrive, for shortly after leaving home, she was stung on the lip by an insect, becoming so ill that she turned back immediately, and in two days she was dead. Lovely, cultured ladies, capable and fragile, presiding over mansions that are today marvels of infinite good taste, yet surrounded by vast forests where indians still skulked in the fastnesses of the bayou and millions in dollars couldn'tsmooth away all of the un- expected elements of this fabulous corner of the country which even to this day few of the people in the world know anything about.

But night was lengthening, and we must say goodnight. Mr. Bob lighted me to my apartment , moving along the back gallery and holding an oil lamp before, as there is no electricity at the Cottage.. My bedroom was carpeted with Brussels and the chairs were covered with rare old toile. But all these I merely glanced at as I fell into my great bed and to sleep.

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December 11th - Monday.

I aweke at two o'clock this morning, sleepy but contented just to lie there in my adequate four-poster, listening to the call of the night owls and the many calls of night-birds that peopled the woodlands hard by. And so I was disappointed when I aoke a second time to discover it was dawn and that I had fallen asleep without listening long to the sounds of the night. But a new chorus of songsters were busy in the park and the gardens, and in their more brilliant and happier tones, they amply recompensed me for what I had missed in the night.

I accordingly jumped out of bed, dashed through my bath, and in slipping into my clothes, paused only long enough to examine again the smart Directoire preserve jars, now standing on my mantle, having been brought down from the apartments on the second floor by Miss Louise who must have remembered by admiration for their pure white backgrounds and the luscious red of the cherry and the currents with their lively green leaves which I had mentioned before when visiting the Cottage.

A short flight of steps on the far side of the wing,--and away from the court side of the house, led me into the English Garden on the West side of the house. I wandered through it, remarking upon the curtain of mist that was shortly to be shot through by the rising sun. Along the entrance drive I wandered, in front of the Cottage and along the terrace before it from whence a steep drop leads one into the sunken garden below the great live-oaks that dominate the summit. Thence my path took me to the gardens on the East of the house, beyond the little school where Mrs. Audubon once had taught, and beyond the hot-house, and into the kingdom of sweet olive and Japonica that clung on the green branches like great flattened pancakes of snow. I suppose Miss Louise and Sabina were still sleeping and I knew not where Mr. Bob might be, but a servant in the building housing the kitchen must have seen me enter this lovely formal garden, for shortly "Elmer" appeared coming down a path toward me, bearing a tray of orange juice and Louisiana-brewed coffee. At elsbee it would have been served while still I was in bed, but it was pleasant to enjoy it here in the shadow of the cool fragrance of the sweet olive. Besides, if I had been in bed, I probably would have missed in part the spectacle of "Elmer",--a tall, thin, gauky negress, looking in body like an emaciated orangotang, and strikingly gowned in a wilted white gown, wearing tortoise shell glasses and an ever-grown boudoir-cap. . Wandering farther and farther away from the house, I rested at at gate, quite remote from the entrance nearest the hot-house, and there I sat and finished my coffee and a cigarette, until a little silver bell announce the breakfast hour. Arriving shortly, I found Mr. Bob and Sabina and Miss Louise and her nephew who had driven in during the night. As usual, Miss Louise did not eat with us, but assited in keeping the servant make the rounds with fruit, bacon and eggs, grits, pancakes and coffee. Surely these people carry out the old traditions,--including a beard that groans.

We chatted for a while on the front gallery, watching the sun shoot long rays through the bannered moss hanging from the great oaks, and then at ten:thirty, Miss Louise, Sabina I started out.

Dec. 11th - continued.

It was pleasant as we rode through the woodland on the way from The Cottage to the big road, Sabina and I on the front seat with Miss Louise on the back, strikingly attired in a pink straw hat, an orange coat, from the lower part of which escaped a flowered pique dress.

First we headed up the big road a little way, stopping first at Wakefield, the ancestral home of the Sterlings. Before the war it had been a magnificent structure, three stories high, but the years that had followed saw the property divided, and with the division the house had been divided horizontally so that we remained but a story and a half. Even in this reduced hight, the old house gave an atmosphere of quiet elegance.

Miss Louise sat in the car while Sabina and I went up the front walk, being greeted on the gallery by the lady who lives at the plantation alone, save for the servants and occasional guests,--primarily writers who like the Audubon chronicler, Miss O'Rourke, actually stays at Wakefield while writing the volume.

I had understood that the lady had had difficulty with her eyes, and I was accordingly somewhat surprised that she had come out on the gallery to greet us so cordially. Her hair was white and her dress was a lovely plain black crepe. Her face was beautiful with the touch of resignation dominated by the sober will to carry on. I didn't notice her eyes, but from the way she let her eyelids droop, I gathered that the light might be a little strong for her.

It was a pleasure to step into the lovely big hall, so spacious and simply, yet sumptuously furnished, with its circular wal at the far end, up the side of which circled a lovely staircase. She pointed out a charming old spinet in the hall which I should have missed,--the perportions were so ample and the furniture so modest in size. In the Livingroom she pointed out other lovely and historic pieces, the great double folding doors at the archway between the front and rear rooms with two great columns marking the division, and in the second room the marveleus old mahogny dish closets made into the walls,--this being the only architectural feature of the room that carried dark wood, the walls and ceiling being white, and the floors of natural wood without varnish, as white and spotless as only sand and soap could make them. And then her old Sterling desk, which she opened for us, showing us the secret drawer she had found and many papers including the wedding Certificate of the first Sterling, reading something like this :

I, so and so Sterling, no clergyman being present, do hereby take So-and-So for my lawful wife, in the presence of the following witnesses whose signatures are appended herewith this month and day and year.

followed by Mr. Sterling's signature, that of his new wife, and the names of the witnesses, all distinguished personages of the region.

Mr. S terling's portrait adorned the mantle piece in the same room.

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December 11th,--continued -Wakefield.

I congratulated the lady upon her exquisite treatment of the window draperies, a beautiful plain white material, falling gracefully from the great height of the window, and caught low, perhaps a yard fro the floor, to which it fell in a rich fold. The same treatment was duplicated for the Dutch door leading to a pantry in the rear. She seemed please that we like the simple yet noble care with which she had executed everything. Then she wished us to see and old medle sewing-machine which she lead us to on the back gallery, enclosed during the Winter. She pointed out some of the curious mechanisms, and then lead us to the other side of the house where her lovely tables a and bedroom pieces were of the same quality and treatment in detail as the other rooms had revealed. She also pointed out her flower garden t the side of the house, speaking, too, of the modest success she had had with japonicas and whatnot. Miss Louise had told me before that she had superintended all of this and that she managed the plantation too.

She accompanied us back to the front gallery, saying goodbye and asking us to please stop by to visit her the next time we passed. She said that Miss Louise was different from most people in that she always asked her if she wouldn't care to go out whenever Miss Louise was passing. It wasn't until dinner or rather supper that night that I learned for the first time that in reality that the lovely lady of Wakefield had never been able to see since she was such a small child she could remember what objects really looked like.

From Wakefield we drove south to a little below Bains, turning off to the right toward the great plantation empires of the Burrows, Bowmans'ereys and Heaven knows who all. Nearly five miles up the road, we struck off on a little xxxxxxx dirt road, which in lead us to a wood, concealed in the midst of which was a lovely old prick church which the planters long ago in ante-bellum days had erected as a community house of worship. Miss Louise said there had once been a lovely graveyard nearby, but it was not completely hidden by a thicket of cherokee roses and brambles. The church itself has been condemned, by whom or under what man made law I ha en't the vaguest notion since it was obvious services couldn't have been held in it for decades. The pews were still there but sadly sagging and the old organ had collapsed in the corner, nothing being left but the bellows. A great space of flooring had been ripped up in one corner, one or two windows were complely out while other pxixxxxx panes bore mute testimony that youthful vandals had put stones through them. But what remained of the windows that were more or less intact were a glory in beautifully stained glass, -about six inches square each gorgeous glowing color from ruby red through pale greens, amethyst, yellow and royal blue. Shade of Bohemian arts that are priceless and a king's ransom that at a moment crash into dust or shattered to pieces by the thoughtless pranks of untutored children. As I stepped out onto the doorless portal, I could only think of Aunt Cammie and the people who lived on La Cote Joyeuse who owned a long cabin which they didn't want or use for which Aunt Cammie offered them twentyfive dollars. They refused to sell, and apparently seemed to be content when the cabin was blown down and rotted away. May the wind blow gently through the gaping crevices and windows of

December 11th,--continued.

Leaving Saint Mary's lovely, disintergrating chapel, we returned to the big road, heading xxxxxx north toward the Tunica Hills,-- a surprisingly elevated area for Louisiana, and somewhat reminiscent of the old Natchez traces into which this hilly country merges further away. It was evident, took that these hills meant much to Miss Louise, for she had not only mentioned them in her writings, but she had incorporated them somehow as somehow related to her own life, in what manner, however, no one will probably ever know.

After 14 miles or so, we headed south again, stopping off at Rosebank to call on Miss Francia,--possibly her name formerly may have been Francis Barrow or Burton, -- I never did catch it.

Before reaching the place, Miss Louise explained that originally Rosebank had been a church, but sometime early in the turn of the 1800's, it had metapperphosed into an Inn. Later,, and sometime well before the war, it had again metamorphosed into a plantation home. There were lovely live oaks about the place, although the house itself did not embrace all the white purity that gray moss seems to demand as a perfect counterpart. Before going up to the house, Miss Louise pointed to a hill far off beyond little Bayou Sarah Creek, saying that on that high plateau stood Ellersly, one of the magnificent homes of this region and it was there that Miss Francia was born and reared until she, Miss Louise and others had gone to Miss Howard's Finishing School, now famous as Afton Villa. Subsequently, through a variety of financial disasters, Miss Francia had been reduced and reduced and reduced. By now we were approaching the gallery, and Miss Francia greeted us, a beautifully cultured lady in a grayish, faded calico, laundered to within an inch of its life but as prim as though it might have been taffeta. I thought of what the girl had said to Aunt Cammie's aunt once just after their ruination by the War:"But you, my dear, can afford to wear calico".

It was evident that Miss Francia and Miss Louise were enchanted to see each other, for I gathered that circumstance hasn't made it possible very fre uently these latter years. Robina and I let them walk toget er before us, a pitiful pair, poor Miss Louise walking with so much difficulty because of her deformity and Miss Francia able to take only xxxxpxxxxxx make an inch with each step, having fallen three times and cracked her hip bone beyond repair the first time and splintering it further the second. Frankly the spectacle was not without its paradox, two poor decrepit old ladies, struggling through life like a couple of hobbled horses, and yet somehow all that had gone before in the way of culture and refinement dominated their whole being, with kindness and courtesy for eachother and for us being the dominant factor and a certain unmindfulness of the hard blows that Fate had dealt them so that if one hadn't know er seen them but had merely heard them speak, one would suppose that none of the vicissitudes of life had ever made the slightest impression on the personalities of these whose sweet courtesies and absence of self transcended all the mere mangling that physical or financial blows could deal them.

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December 11th,--continued.

In her journey down from Illeralie to Rosebank, Miss Francia,--I believe her classmates knew her as Frankie Brandon--the descending scales have been made apparently with that calm and poise that one associates with the culture of the ladies of the Old South, and to these qualites might be added a glance at the kindliness of the voice, its tonal euphony still sweet, coupled with a smile that betrays no bitterness She apologized for having no portraits to show us, but these have been removed to other homes where this relative and that one of a later generation has wanted something to fill a wall space, and feeling too that since their children may bear the same given name as as this one or that in a portrait, it is only fair that Miss Francia should relinquish these last remaining vestiges of the formerfamily objets of art, for she went probably last long anyway, so what's the difference. That wasn't the way Miss Francia put it, screening as she did their thoughtlessness if not their criminal lack of consideration, but in reality that's about what it boiled down to.

Rosebank had accordingly been stripped of all the heirlooms which Miss Francia had loved so dearly, all with the exception of a great four-poster bed eightfeet wide and accordingly proportioned, and while this was on the second floor and was therefore difficult for Miss Francia to reach, she wanted us to see it particularly because this last association of an earlier and better life was being taken away by some relative of a younger generation at three o'clock this afternoon. We acquiesed to her request that she be permitted to go with us to the upper gallery, realizing how keenly she must want to share in the admiration of this wonderful old piece before it had disappeared forever. There was something close to personified tragedy in the two figures of Miss Louise and Miss Francia as they hobbled across the gallery, poor old ladies staggering along physically as they strove enonemically, Miss Francia able to cover but an inch of ground with each step, her body gently swaying ina half-arch movement while Miss Louise with one leg much shorter than the other, hobbled in a manner suggesting a crumbling column. Poor things, they had lived too long, their fortunes had vanished and their world had gone awry,--and yet that very civilization which had nurtured them in the beginning, only to evaporate, had left with them a spirit of kindness and gentility, insulating their bodies from the physical shocks that would have stunned less courageous souls, at the same time engendering a sweetness in their manner that would perfume an indifferent society far into the circle of a newer, possibly stronger, and surely a more prosaic age.

For a little while Sabina and I walked in the garden, leaving the ladies to talk for a little while together, they were so bubbling over with happiness in being together, each exchanging with the other little reminiscences,--probably about the only joy they had left to share with each other, , and then we said good bye, and touchingly these two old friends embraced eachother affectionately, and we remarked upon the beauty of the great oaks along the high way, but in reality, I suppose, we all had Miss Francia in our hearts.

Dec. 11th-- continued.

It's not far from Rosebank to Liveoaks, a neighboring plantation having one of the finest avenues of great moss draped trees that I know in this locality. I suppose it is a good mile in length if not longer. At the far end of the drive stands the house,--an example of early architecture, vauely spanish of late 18th century construction,--rather plain and substantial. The servant advised us that the Master and Mistress were out, and so we declined to go in, but drove back down the great avenue which more than recompensed us for our visit.

Down the road a little further we turned off to the rich penatation region, so long made famous by the beautiful houses various members of the Barrow family. It was good to leave the cement highway, and wind along the dirt road that wound along the little hillocks that raise this region above the plains farther to the south.

Through a vast park of great green liveoaks, we drove up a slow incline, at the top of which stands Greenwood, and enormous house with a gallery formed by heroic colonnades that run around the entire house. As one approaches the great mansion through the grove of oaks, the white columns glimmer through the moss draped trees like gigantic candles or enormous pipes of some fabulous organ.

As we draw up in front of the vast gallery, Miss Frank Percy, the chatelaine, comes out to greet us,--a wholesome, substantial woman, redolent with good health and charming in her cordiality.. There is a special impetus to the imagination as one sees little Miss Louise, frail yet strong as asymbol of an earlier generation, typifying the quiet and secluded spirit of the remote Cottage, balanced against the personality of the equally strong spirit of Mrs. Percy's whose Greenwood represents the opulence, and almost ostentation of the old South at the full flush of its ante-bellum grandeur.

The interior of the house is harmoniously in sympathy with the ample proportions of the whole structure. The hall is tremendous, with lovely corinthian columns to the right and left of the central arch, and a beautifully curved staircase at the far end, swirls gracefully to the second floor. The ceiling of each of the great rooms on either side of the hall are decorated with a beautiful rosate medalion, --the design in copper, painted white, and accordingly in perfect harmony with the white walls. The mantle pieces are of Italian marble,--black or dark green, with bronzed metalwork, suggesting the Directoire merged with the first Empire. Acetyline gass is used in the house and an endless gass pipe descends from the ceiling in each room, in ever instance just off center, avoiding the lovely rosate ceiling medalians. There are sumptous pieces of furniture, dining room table and charis, buffets, lounges, etc., with a Boule cabinet or two faintly suggestive of the famous St. Cloud cabinets of Marie Antoinette, now in the Metropolitan. Back on the great gallery, we looked off ac oss the lawns. To the left is a charming lilly pond, and balancing it on the right, a beautiful little lake. I remarked to Mrs. Percy that its size, general shape and the delicious

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Dec. 11th - cont.

setting of green reminded me of the little lake of Marie Antoinette at the farm at Versailles. Mrs. Percy said she had been to England but had never been to France, so she couldn't say as to the similarity betwen the two pieces of water, but she said that "this lake can float a mule". Frankly I was a little taken back by this astonishing information as a mental picture of a bloated mule, its rigid legs sticking straight up in the fx air on the lovely surface of this water,-- for a couple of m snowy swann was the only thing I had ever seen floating on Marie Antoinette's lake. Later, I learned, however, that there is an expression "deep enough to swim a mule", and I suppose Mrs. Percy was quoting this colloquilism to give us an idea of its depth..

From Greenwood we passed by Allerslie, and drove on to Highland, the home of the original Farrows,--a plain house set deep in a huge grove of liveoaks. The interesing arrangements in this early plantation house, Miss Louise wanted us to see especially, but the family was not at home and so we contented ourselves by drinking in the sturdy charm and peace of this old old "father of plantations".

Fording littl bayou Sarah Creek, we drove along a dirt road, from which branched several lesser roads, many of which lead to plantation houses of varying interest, but all of which Miss Louise would liked to have shown us if we could only stay at The Cottage for a season. zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz
But it was getting lunch time, and we had decided to dine in Saint Francisville, and so we headed toward town, passing by the road at lead to lovely, crumbling little Saint-Mary's-in the Woods- and on past Afton Villa to contemporary civilization in the form of automolbies and restaurants

continued on following page

Dec. 11th - continued.

Before sunset, we had finished our calls in St. Francisville, terminating them with the Misses Nelson's,--younger ladies in their fifties, one of whom performs wedding ceremonies in her authority as clerk of the court,--and I was impressed for it came to me for the first time that a man might be married by a woman. They asked me to return to St. Francisville to speak before one of their clubs, leaving me free to select any topic I might care to. We stopped, too, at Mr. Newman's little shop,--I couldn t figure out what might be the nature of his business,--possibly repairing furniture, although I am not certain. It was hopelessly in dis-order, reminding me of the apartment of the Hardy's which I had visited several years ago in New York. Madame Hardy was a brilliant woman, among othe things having interduced the pasteurization of milk into the United States. Her husband was a brainy professor, and their child of twelve or fourteen was a prodegdy, speaking dozens of languages, including several Chinese dialects, getting top drages in every hing and getting too many degrees in college while still in his tender years. I've forgotten how I happened to be invited to their apartment, but I do recall that there was no place for anyone to sit down,--all the chairs, sofas, radiators and tables being piled high with half read newspapers, books and periodicals. Mr. Newman's shop was like that, and the mind of the man seemed accordingly cluttered. A german by birth, he had graduated from U. S. C. and lived the rest of his lives in St. Francisville.,

As the sun was sinking beyond the treetops, we headed North up the big road toward Bains and the turn off that took us back to the Cottage. Miss Louise Seemingly untired by this round of visits, Miss Louise chatted with us all the way home, telling of the little episodes she could recall of the troublesome times in this lovely region when "Reconstruction" was raising havoc with what remained after the scourge of War had passed them by, --of the roving bands of negroes, moving en masse at midnight down this same big road toward St. Francisville, intent upon wipping out the town, and how they had been stopped at the edge of the town's limits and scattered by a few good volleys from concealed muskets, and how at the Cottage one never slept at night while the men of the house patroled the road leading from the main highway determined to ward off night marauders, and how The Cottage had escaped destruction and ultimately how security had been re-established and how differently the negroes faired in their new freedom and how opulence swiftly turned into a struggle for existence for the one time planters, and how gradually the old ways of life began evaporating and the amenities of life lingered on only in the personalities of those who had grown into maturity under the refinements of a society whose keystone had crumbled. And I was gratefull for this oppertunity which had been mine today, for in mingling for a little while with these few grand old pillars of the Southland, I felt that I had brushed close to an age, the like of which we would never again see, either through succession of duplication.

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Dec. 11th - continued.

Mr. Bob was awaiting our return on the back gallery, and it was pleasant to ~~them~~ sit for awhile before supper, watching the smoke curl up from the kitchen, further back in the yard, listening to the whirr of an occasional owl sweeping from a treetop in the west garden across to the sunken garden on the east, and picking out of first evening stars that twinkled in the pale blue heave, and talking about the sweet little family cemetary on an adjoining plantation two miles beyond the east park where the first Mrs. Davis - Jefferson Davis was buried, and of an old darkie of many a year back who was being sympathized with by a Northern woman who asked him to tell her of his hard life in slavery. In the latter category, the story goes that the woman asked old Sam if it was true he wore a chain before the Yankees had come and freed him. "Yassum, I she' did, M'am." "And when the Yankees came your chain was gone too, Sam"

"Yassum, it she' was, and so was the gold watch on the end of it that Marse Tom done give me many years before".

But the tinkling of a little silver bell called Mr. Bob and me to join Miss Louise and Robina in the dining room where we ate with relish the delicous supper,--a delicious fruit cup, fried chicken, mashed potatoes with cheese, calliflower, eggplant salads and cakes without number, talking the while of plantations, an drinking in the quaint atmosphere of the lovely old room, its e untless fine old china and glasses shimmering in the subdued light of the old oil lamps.

Before we were finished, Miss Louise's nephew, a youth of height and thinness, and one time aviator, arrived, and he added a contemporary touch to a conversation that had hitherto been almost wholly ante-bellum. He said that a showboat, The Dixie Queen had docked that afternoon at St. Francisville, and wouldn't we like to drive down to see tonight's performance of an old-river melodrama. Miss Louise thought she wouldn't care to go. Mr. Bob knew he wouldn't, and saying goodnight, retired while Robina thought she would like to go, and I thought a lot as to whether Miss Louise would rather have us all go so that she could get some rest after such a busy day or whether she would prefer to have me stay and talk with her of the good old days which she had known so intimately and which I had learned to love almost too late.

~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~was the performance of the Show out was over about eleven, and saying goodnight to the others, the youth and I who occupied adjoining apartments in the wing, made a rearing fire in our fireplace, and sitting before it until two, we talked of contemporary problems and punished a bottle of Old Crow.

December 12th - Tuesday.

I slept until seven this morning and so I dashed through my bath with vigor and intensity, hoping to be out on the terrace before the rising sun shattered the clouds of mists that hung over the great trees in the park.

I walked around the island, down below the terrace, and circled through the sunken garden back to the rear gallery, where I found Mr. Bob reading the morning paper.

The angular old servant appeared shortly with a neat little tray bearing the orange juice and coffee which tasted twice as delicious as usual, thanks to last night's Old Crow and my morning walk.

At eight the ladies joined us on the gallery and shortly afterward the little silver bell rang again. Louisiana coffee, scrambled eggs and bacon, hot rolls, grits and gravy, marmalade and toasted muffins, griddle cakes and~~xxyyp~~ and more Louisiana coffee. The youth appeared before we were finished and Miss Louise ~~xx~~ excuse herself for a bit.

We lingered for awhile over our cigarettes, discussing current Louisiana politics, and what the schedule was for the day. The youth and Mr. Bob were driving up to Natchez to call on a relative who had been injured in a horrible automobile accident a few days back, while Robina and I were returning to Melrose, going by way of Natchez, too.

On the gallery, Miss Louise joined us again, and we speeded Mr. Bob and the youth on their way. Then Robina and I took ~~xx~~ our leave of Miss Louise, pleasantly laden with a big box of japonicas for Aunt Cammie, manuscripts for me to read and a nice fat white box which Miss Louise had been preparing for us in the pantry, so that we might picnic on the way home.

The woodland was damp and sweet and cool as we drove down the incline from the cottage, forded Alexander's Creek and wound our way toward the big road. Once there we headed north, until we reached Woodville, where we turned from the cement road, and headed up the old plantation road that ran for fourty miles thr ugh traces on to Natchez. I hadn't been over it since a year ago last September, and I was delighted to find it more lovely than ever, its deep tunnel like passages cut here and there by side roads that lead to plantations hidden away in a seemingly impenetrable forest, and its curious and unexpected curves untrammeled by automobiles which of course from this point forward will always use the modern cement road, I suppose.

Halfway through this picturesque and romantic highway, we stopped for our picnic of chicken and sandwiches, fruit and ~~x~~ cake, making glad the heart of a solitary darkie who read by on horseback by tossing him a piece from our from ourbriming ing lunch box.

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Dec. 12th, continue.

We sat for awhile, enjoying our cigarettes and watching play of the noeday sun through the tangle of treetops and vines that entwined over the traces ahead of us, marveling at the beauty of this extraordinary and storied region, dotted with beautiful old plantations and the memories of this paradise of rural enchantment which had flourished so abundantly a hundred years and more ago, only to slip back into slumber and be almost forgotten by the outside world.

We drove on a few miles, turned off at a little chit church, and along an old plantation road past Judge Armstrong's place with its beautiful lawns and unusual allee of live oaks that turn at right angles half way along instead of maintaining the usual straight avenue. We stopped too at the lovely classic plantation church, white and almost New England like in its reserved position several hundred yards back from the road. We lingered for a while on its gallery, trying to picture the scene in ante-bellum days when smart carriages arrived on Sunday mornings, bearing the planters family to the service before they drove off for dinner with neighbors living down anyone of the countless plantation roads that cut through the traces along the old main route.

Further along we were struck by the fact ~~this~~ that the hunting season. We were getting closer to Natchez and one might expect almost anything that couldn't be imagine. We were not long in sighting it, for there beside a cut in sat a woman on a folding chair, embroidering pink rosebuds on a piece of fine linen as she balanced a double barrel shootgun across her lap. I suppose there is no point in wasting one's time waiting for deer to pass in one's direction when the embroidery floss could just as well fill in the time. What a pity Calvin Coolidge could not have been thus fortified when he used to go fishing, but I doubt if Mr. Coolidge would ever have appreciated that doings of the inha ftants of the Natchez region.

At Natchez we avoided seeing anyone we knew, driving straight to the ferry where we waited for half an hour until it returned from Vidalia. In the Under the Hill section there was much activity, trucks running to and frow with material for the bridge which is a building, I suppose. And further up the water's edge we noticed the great piles of lumber standing on what had once been the famous gardens of Magnolia in the Vale, so famous before the Confederacy that the Mississippi boats frequently stopped for an hour to permit their passengers to stroll through these most extensive and beautifully landscaped gardens of the entire river's course. Half of them have long since gone into the river, and the rest are now obliterated by the products of a busy lumber mill going full blast where once were glorious parterres.

Once across the river, our drive along the flat lands of Louisiana was pleasant but without the beauty of the wonderful scenic beauty of the Mississippi side of the river. Passing

Dec. 12th, - cont.

passing through Natchitoches, we were delighted by the simple beauty of the seasonal decorative lighting which this oldest city in Louisiana carries out each year. Across the strets beautifu little blue and yellow electric lights are strung, and as the east side of the main thoroughfare is void of buildings because of the Red River channel which courses along through the town, the lights that are strung over the bridges that span this approach to the main street, an splendid opportunity is given to carry out beautiful designs that seem to be contrived from little stars brought down from the vast expanse overhead.

We reached Melrose about eight, nearly collapsed with silly laughter when we discovered that Robina had left her week-end bag containing all her clothes and things at the Cottage, and so staggered up to the balcony of the front gallery where Miss Nellie and Aunt Nammie were awaiting us with open arms.

Aunt Nammie prepared a cold supper for us, and while she aggraned the beautiful snowy ~~xxxx~~ japonicas in a heavy shallow bowl, Robina and I chatted with her of all that had happened both at Melrose and the Cottage since three days back.

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Dec. 13th - Wednesday.

With Uncle Whitefoot bdside me, I slept heavily last night, but was up before dawn, bathed and out of the house before seven for a walk.

On the Montrose road, a passing truck stopped to offer me a ~~lift~~ lift which I gladly accepted, for it's always and education to get this sidelight that comes through conversation with the work-a-day folk of this locality.

The driver told me he was Tissie Rachel, that his mother had been the greatest woman this country had ever produced and that he hand't minded so much when she died of typhoid fever,--not at first he hadn't, but now as the time slipped by he missed her more and more each day.

He said he knew Miss Cammie, too,--had known her for years, and that she was a great woman too. He wanted to know "if she still lives with that old furniture", and wasn't it queer how some people when they grow older seem to like to live with old furniture instead of buying good new stuff at the store.

I left him at Montrose, walked for a few miles, and then road back to Melrose with a man who said he always liked to give people a lift because he never knew when he might want one although he had a business and owned a farm, too, and that he always did what the Bible said he should do and he hoped to get along alright. He asked me if I had heard of Judge Jones of Natchitoches. Said he was alright when he had been elected judge, but now he wasn't. Said the Judge had even parked his car on his farm for carryings on with a stenographer. Said he didn t believe in such ungodliness and that he had gone the next day to the Courthouse and told the Judge what he thought of people who did such things. He hoped he'd never get into any difficulty and be brought before Judge Jones.

We dropped me at Melrose gate, andI explored the big house to discover if Aunt Cammie and Debina had returned from their trip into the Little River region where Debina had planned to go with her gay 1890 costume to have her picture taken riding in a buggy with Charles Mazurette.

They returned just after we had sat down for dinner, after which Debina came over to my house where we were joined by Aunt Cammie, with much talk of swann lakes, Bohemian glass and the estate car and a driver which Aunt Cammie would give me to return to St. Francisville for another limited visit within another week. Debian volenteered to provide swann for the lake while Aunt Cammie will provide the latter which I am supposed to layout, and I shall secure a fortune in Bohemian glass., which we shall both save from its impending destruction and at the same time use to emblish a little white temple that really ought to be something if properly designed and built on the edge of the margin of this little Louisiana lake that will, I hope, be reminiscent of the little farm at Petit Trianon.

December 13th - continued.

Miss Nellie joined us for mid-afternoon coffee, after which she and Debina headed for Shreveport

Aunt Cammie concentrated on Sam Brown and Negis who are working in the front gardens while I got after a bit of neglected correspondence and Journal.

After supper, Aunt Cammie and I talked much of Miss Louise and her delicious home and her obviously unhappy situation, for life must have seemed cruel to poor Miss Louise, a victim of infantile paralysis and it would seem never blessed with a romantic episode in the long years of her life. I told Aunt Cammie that Miss Louise had spoken of the three years she studied medecine in Manhattan, and we had fun imagining the set of circumstances that impelled this little lady, a product of Miss Rewards finishing school, to tear herself away from the fairy-like Cottage and delve into science in far away Manhattan. We spoke, too, of her lack of physical comfort because of Mr. Deb, for she had told Aunt Cammie she always freezes in the Winter months, for Mr. Deb is almost psychopathic in his fear that the Cottage will burn dwon, and accordingly forbids her to burn more than a stick or a twig at a time. I wonder what sort of apolplexy Mr. Deb would have if he should come to Melrose and see the roaring firest that burn with abandontwenty four hours of the day, even when the weather is so warm as at present when we keep all the doors and windows wide open.

I said goodnight to Aunt Cammie a little before nine, came home to sit with Uncle w itefoot for an hour and listen to Fred Allen,--and so to sleep.

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December 14th - Thursday.

It was pleasant to awaken with the first rays of dawn and from by pillow watch the east turn from gray to rose to gold. Frank came about six thirty with my coffee and fix my fire.

He siad:"I think Mr. Lyle will come today." As nobody expected Lyle, I thought this was a fairly b ead guess, but sure enough a wire came later in the day, saying Lyle would arrive on the evening train.

I worked at my typewriter until noon, went through the incoming mail with pleasure, and returned to my typewriter afterward. Aunt Camie came for coffee at three, and after much talk about the Bohemian glass and the samples of their luscious coolers, we made a tour of the gardens, fussed a little in Lyle's house, and before we were done, heard the supper bell.

Sister and the Mr. brought Lyle from Perry and I was so busy on my typewriter I didn't get over to the big house at all. But about nine, he and Aunt Cammie called for me and all three of us went over to Lyle's house where we talked long into the night.

It seems that the Federal Writers8 Project for Louisiana staggers along with no one certain as to how long it will last,--although it seems certain now that the State Guide will be brought out alright, whether the Project folds up or not, for its is now being proof-read, so that its ultimate appearance is assured. There are other books scheduled for early completion such as Travel in Old Louisiana, The History of the Negor,--the latter being written entirely by negores on the project the contents of which Lyle says is rather dull, and then there will be a folk lore of Louisiana and another volume, the title of which eludes me. Lyle is under contract to write a novel and also to do The Lower Mississippi River in The River Series of which Krl Karmer's The Hudson is now enjoying such popularity at the moment. Lyle knew Karmer in New Orleans a number of years ago just after Karmer got into edds with the college in Alabama where he taught in the University. I believe Lyle made some sort of an arrangement wit Katherine Anthony, living at 23 Bank Street in Manhattan so that Karl could live there for a time, and thus get a book off.

I want Lyle to do The Lower Mississippi before he does the novel,--it wouldn t be the first time he had made the publishers wait for anovel for years,--for a volume that embraced the region from xxxxxx St. Louis, down through Natchez and Baton Rouge to New Orleans would certainly be in the field of which Lyle could write with unquestioned authority and entertainment.

It was three when I get back to my house. I was enchante to fall asleep and dream of plantations in the lower Mississippi

December 16th
Saturday

It was good to awaken early and discover that yesterday's rain was finished and that a new day gave promise of fine weather.

All morning I worked on mail until mid-morning coffee, when I joined the Madam at the big house. We spent a little time going over request letters frm for books she is going to borrow from L. S. U. and Howard Memorial Library on the first quarter of the nineteen century as it swung around Natchez.

Sam Brown came shuffling up the front walk toward the gallery where we were sitting, bringing with him a nice old negress in a spotless dress of blue, and a snowy apron. Aunt Cammie greated her affectionately, asking about all her people and how things were going down by the spillway where she now lives. It seems she is the old mamy of the Henry children who spent many years here at Melrose. She had much to say about old times and how many wonderful things Aunt Cammie had done for her and for her kin, furnishing them with medecine when they were sick and burying them when they died. Aunt Cammie dismissed it all with a wave of her hand and her usual remark at such times:"I don't remmeber anything about all that."

The old lady had beenxxx touring the neighborhood that morning, taking up a collection for new "posties" which she said their grave yard needed because the fence was falling down and the cows were wandering around and spoiling the flowers and things on the graves. She said Miss Sally had given her fifteen cents,--Sally Hertzog at Magnolia plantation,--and that J. H. had given her ten cents. Such munificence evoked a sligh scream from Aunt Cammie who flew up stairs and brought down her contribution. I don't know how much it was but I suspect it as ten tim s as much as J. H's.

After she had blessed Aunt Cammie, who had urged her to come back and see her again, the oldxxxxxx mamy went on her way, calling down the blessings from Heaven on the Madam.

Frank arrived at that moment, bringing me a message from Lyle, asking me to come over for a highball before dinner, and as it was then eleven thirty, I flew. We sat on his gallery for half an hour, talking over old times, remarking upon curious pronunciations and changes in meanings of words since phantation days, such as "frolic" and Pompei, and how his grandfather always said Bureau for burro, telling Lyle once about riding through the Rockies on a bureau.

After dinner, Lyle and I walked over to see Zeline. The sun was so warm that Lyle visably perspired although he was in his shirtsleeves. We picked up a drink at the saloon, and so continued our progress to Zeline's, where we found her presiding over her feathered and furred friends on the hearth stone where a stew was cooking to intrigue the curiousity of chickens and cats alike. But the beds looked as white as ever, and the pillows on old Zeline's bed looked twice as white as usual, thanks to a striking blue banner hung on the wall behind the headboard. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx On this blue field of the banner ran the legend, "Refresh yourself here"--rather startling in such a position, but under the edge of the headboard ran the announcement:"Coca-Cola".

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Dec. 16th - Batu. cont.

We talked with our hostess for a little while, and then leaving a remembrance and the promise to return again in a day or so to bring her some medecine, we walked down to the saloon again where we met several acquaintances, Mr. Machel, who had given me a lift a morning or two before, and a mulatto carpenter who had done much work for the Melrose houses, and was now building a big house for the Kohn's who hold the dizzying mortgage on the Hertzog plantation. I think his name is Joe, but as an old associate of Melrose workers he knew Lyle, and he insisted on buying us a drink. Lyle reciprocated, and then we sat on the gallery, looking out over the beautifully smooth blue surface of Cain River, and remarking upon the almost Chinese appearance of the wooden bridge that spanned it at this point. I assured Lyle that eventually I was going to have it painted a red-orange lacquer, which outxxxx ought to do something to the whole ensemble of water, pine trees on the far bank and the sky, and Lyle said he would arrange to have hundreds of mulattoes attend a picnic in the evening on one side of the bridge, with stipulations that they carry Japanese lanterns back and forth across it as they plied their way from the picnic buffet to the saloon on the other bank and back again, ad infinitum.

Celine's old husband, Joe Mesque came by on horseback, looking exactly like General Beauregard. He stopped to say hello to us, and in lifting his hat and in other little mannerisms, somehow gave off all of the old courtesy and kindly disposition that one always associates with the old darkies of ante-bellum days. By now Lyle was buying drinks for many a dusky face that I had never seen before, and Old Joe came in for a round of beer, declining anything stronger. His nephew, a youth of 17 or so, came by and Joe introduced him to us,--forgetting that I had met Edward before when I had brought home the bouquet of chickens from Celine's a week or so back. Drinks went 'round again, and Joe mounted his horse and galloped down the road toward home,--an old, old many but still as lithe as a youth.

As three roads converge at the bridgehead, and the saloon is the only public of its kind in the neighborhood, a changing round of new faces revolved about the gallery as new people suggested they would enjoy a drink and Lyle was thoroughly enjoying the general carefree, happy dispostion of these Saturday afternoon loiterers

About five we walked toward home, where supper was awaiting our arrival. The board was soon clear of all sitters, however, except for Lyle and Aunt Tammie and me, for once we get to talking plantation, time always seems to cease operation.

Supper at last done for, we joined the Madam before her Franklin stove for a while, retiring later with a bowl of ice to Lyle's cabin to talk and read from Father Mississppi until late

Dec. 17th - Sunday.

I awoke at six and built a little fire, and I lay down again until coffee should arrive. When I awoke, I glanced at the fireplace, and congratulated myself upon the grand arrangement of the logs which were blazing gayly. A second later it dawned on me that the expert eye and hand that had built this romantic pyre must have been other than mine, and at that moment, Frank arrived with my breakfast tray, gigglie in his beard because he had for the first time been able tearrange things for me while I was still asleep.

A heavy mist hung over the landscape, and I was accordingly gald to stay inside and do some work. As I was typing an hour or so later, Frank came back,--still giggling, and bearing a lovely vase full of white roses. He said the Madam had told him he was to slip in with these while I was still asleep, and so would I please close my eyes so he could carry out her orders. I complied.

Dinner was augmented by the Coutierville family and one or two others, with a huge turkey and all the fixings.

After dinner I walked in the garden a bit with Charles Mazarette and talked for a bit with Lyle and the Dr. and his wife in the Library. Shortly afterward all of us found a resting place for an elongated siesta, but while the others slept, I fiddled about my maisonette with my typewriter and books, and before I knew it, supper was upon us.

The household returned to its accustomed quiet shortly thereafter, with all the guests having gone, and after an hour with the Madam, Lyle and I gathered ice and retired to his cabin.

We talked much of the plantation and its old old problems. He spoke of his efforts to teach certain mulatoes to read and the eventual dispair of ever getting anywhere. Frank's boy who is bright and of some twenty summers was one of Lyle's pupils. He used a preliminary reader, starting with David is a boy, this boy is David, this sone is David, David is my son. This lesson was followed by one in spelling. "This " being always pronounced "dis", and no amount of effort and persuaion could make it otherwise. . "David" was spelled pretty well and then "this", and then "son" and then Lyle had spelled the words to Tony, , with Tony repeating them, as far as "D A V I D" - and what does that spell, to which Tony responded in triumpth: "Dis".

Such conversation is so entertaining when Lyle is present, he has such a funa of ancedotes to illustrate with, and yet, in spite of the good drinks,--one of which I coughed on for hours,--and in spite of the good reading, I was so sleepy, I said good bye to Lyle, for he was leaving early in the morning, and I retired for the night.

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Dec. 18th - Monday.

Up at six-thirty and out for an early walk, - a little uncertain about the three mile lane after all of yesterday's rain, but I found the going wasn't bad.

I had hoped to catch the train from up the line, riding as far as Derry where I knew Lyle would be boarding it, so that I might surprise him. But I missed the train, and as I was quite a ways from home, I caught a ride with Sheriff Payne of Natchitoches who was good enough to bring me straight to Melrose, although it was out of his way by twenty miles.

I dashed off a few letters, took a little walk down to the bridge before dinner as the sun was now out, and after dinner sat on the gallery with the Madam reading much good mail that come for us both.

At two or a little after, Frank brought the coffee tray to my house whence arrived shortly afterward not only the Madam but also Celeste and Miss Nellie who had returned from Shreveport to read to me.

The Madame had a hilarious story to tell us of goings on in the kitchen. When the cook was in the garden and Frank was bringing me coffee this morning, it seems that somebody slipped into the kitchen and finding a large piece of meat cooking on the stove, they cut it in two, taking out the center portion, and placing the piece back together to it wouldn't appear especially evident that it had been touched. This was of course going a little too far, and so tonight was desi nated as an excellent hour for a conference, and I suppose that the offender, who is probably Negis, one of the gardners, will get an invitation to join the staff of field hands.

What with the superstitions and the actual fears based on frequent enough violence among themselves, it is no wonder that any of them want to inform against the ~~xx~~ other, event saintly old Madame Hubert-Becque, as steadfast a Romanist as there is in this region, says, for instance, that you can't pray for help against those who steal for if you do they will walk down to the river and drown themselves. Just what will make them do this or why she should care if they should meet such a fate I haven't the vaguest notion, but one will have to live much longer than white people ever haven' been knew to if one may ever hope to understand the mental operations of these poor people.

Miss Nellie and I read for an hour, and after supper talked with the Madam for an hour in her room and then after getting half way through the new section of the McGruder Diary which Nebian had sent, we said good night.

Dec. 19th - Tuesday.

Dawn came in Wagnerian trappings, with the bang of thunder and the bleating of cows which somehow supplemented in a bovine sort of way the mental pictures of the Walkurie. All morning the rains descended and the thunder rolled and all day the cows were mooing in a kind of mournful protest at being separated from their calfs and changed to a different pasture.

Miss Nellie came over early and we read much in Claiborne's Mississippi History and of Outlaws that once operated along the Natchez Traces.

At ten, Clemence came over with our coffee. Clemence is an exceptional darkie. She is as thin as a rail and looks about 35, but they say she is in her sixties. Although married, she has no children of her own but is bringing up a child that someone "willed" to her when the baby was but a few weeks old. ~~xx~~

Like the rest of the colored folk hereabouts, I suppose Clemence cannot read, but for all that Clemence is probably one of the smartest negresses one is likely to run across.

She isn't the Melrose cook, for Elmer holds that post, but when something goes wrong in the kitchen or Elmer is laid up, Clemence can step into the breach, and turn out a dinner that surpasses anything Elmer could ever contrive to dish up.

Frequently, however, when there are more guests than usual, Clemenc gives Elmer a hand in the kitchen. Elmer is as slow as dishwater and if it weren't for Clemence at such times, dinners would never get under way, I guess. But far be it from Clemence to get tangled up in a lot of useless undertakings. She serves a beautiful dinner, and with a wave of the dishcloth, the dishwashing is out of the way, and Clemence is on her way to some other undertaking that she likes better. Of course it is just a detail that Clemence, the minx, gets her pots and pans out of the way sooner than anyone else could, and it is amazing that shortly after she has rolled up her sleeves, you will find the dishes done and every pot neatly turned up on the steve or shelves. It's just too bad, however, if you should by error turn ~~xx~~ any of these pots right side up, for if you should, you would discover that Clemence hasn't touched the inside of them, and there they sit, looking immaculate from the outside, with the inside all a-drip with dreese, dried food and what not, but Clemence plays fairly safe, since seldom does ~~x~~ anyone check up on her.

She is bringing me one of her paintings within a few days. She is an artist and works in oils, using the bottom of a cardboard box of the side of a Fairman's soap box as a canvas. And they say her creations are something, whether they be still life, landscapes or portraits. The one she is going to bring me is a scene in a sick room, a man seated in a chair with a woman nursing him. When I

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Dec. 19th - continue.

her about her models, she explained that she never needed any. Sometimes at night, she explained, she has a vision, and getting up she searches around until she finds something to paint on & and then just goes ahead with the paints that Albert McKensie has given her.

But this morning Clemence had a new creation to show us,--not a painting but some dolls. Using a bottle as a base, she creates perfectly splendid little figures, whether it be an old woman leaning on a stick or a pretentiously dressed hottentot, a seem made for his nose and a bit of embroidery for the eyes and mouth. She also has created in this year's group a beautifully dressed black nun, and as she explained to us, the nun has a little girl, and that figure she made with a smaller bottle as a base, and dressed the child exactly as the mother-nun. It reminded me of the priest in the local church named Father Aegis who beget a child by a local colored girl, and it was named Innocent. This was a number of years ago, and the child has now grown to man's estate, and the moment is working in Grand Isle for a priest down there.

Aside from this series of flights into the Arts, Clemence is an exceptionally fine seamstress, and the fringe she makes for one thing or another is beautiful. She is about the only negress on the place at the moment who can spin, too, but she doesn't like to spin, and no matter what cajoling or persuation Aunt Sammie may use on her, Clemence simply wont spin cotton for Aunt Sammie because she simply does not like to spin.

After coffee and our chat with Clemence, we continued our reading until dinner time, breaking the sitting with a walk around the formal garden, and later going over the mail. In the afternoon, our good work went on, and I was enchanted with the account of the first steamer on the Mississippi, built by Nicholas Roosevelt in Pittsburgh, who with Mrs. Roosevelt, made the first trip by steam down to New Orleans in their boat by the same name. I suppose the trip was as exciting as any subsequently made by any steamer, since they were on the Ohio, just entering the Father of Waters, in December of 1811, when unbeknown to them an earthquake of extraobrinary --interruption--- and the upheaval of the bed of the river was so great that no one could find any of the accustomed landmarks, and because of the overflow of water, it was impossible to locate either the old channel or the new. . The Roosevelts stopped their boat where they could along the shore to cut wood for the engine, with Indians appearing to assit them sometimes and whitemen living along the banks lending them what information they could as to the changes effected by the river during the tremendous tremors that had rocked the valley. I must write to Eleanor Roosevelt and see if she has any information regarding the diary Mrs. Roosevelt kept, and particularly regarding her entertaiment on the occasion the New Orleans tied up at Natchez.

Supper was delayed by the presence of callers in the afternoon, and reading was accordingly cut down in the evening when we all folded up our beards at a seasonable hour.

Dec. 20th - Wednesday.

The air was cold this morning as I stepped out into the garden for a little tour before breakfast. But yesterday's clouds had disappered and the narcissus shone bravely in their dark green borders in spite of the frost that was retreating before the rising sun.

Miss Nellie came over at nine and we spent the morning with accounts of doings on the old Natchez trace and a couple of chapters from an old volume describing the region before 1860.

Dinner was uneventful with only one extra, a youth who made little impression on the scene. There was a good mail which we lingered over for half an hour and then took a turn around the formal garden to see the youpon berries which weigh down the little trees in the fullest measure of their fruitfulness at this season.

There were guests at the big house this afternoon, with Dr. McCook, his wife and offspring staying for dinner, or supper.

The Dr. is interested in old houses, particularly those of his home town of Natchitoches, although of late he has discovered other old plantation houses in Louisiana. He was particularly impressed by the Pink House near Donnalsonville which he had seen during the past summer, and regretted that it is fast disappearing from the earth, thanks to the neglect and dismemberment that has overtaken this amazing ante-bellum structure which once boasted of 75 rooms, wonderful stained glass windows, and staircases that we the last word in amplitude, bordering on estentation. Mrs. McCook, sometime back, had been a guest of some people in New Orleans, who had once been guests at the Pink House,--Gallegorve in the days of its glory. They had told her of the regal manner in which the former owners had entertained, frequently sending a steamboat to New Orleans to pick up musicians and their guests, who would be brought up to the Pink House, entertained for a week or two, and then returned to New Orleans by the same chartered boat. With all the grafting and waste that goes inot present day Louisiana politican s pockets, it seems doubly a pity that the state cannot divert a little of this money for saving these wonderful old monuments of a departed glory.

The guests left about 7:30, and we then read until nine from THE SUNNY SOUTH, possibly by Ingraham, an 1860 pyblication of Philadelphia, containing a chapter describing a Natchez plantation of the era. I was enchanted to find a lake bearing swann on its besom, a nice little buttress in my campaign for a swann lake at Belrwae. tempted to take a walk,--the night was so wonderful, what with a good moon and a pale blue flannel sky, but being tired I came home and feel asleep without even turning on the radio.

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Dec. 21st, --Thursday.

Another beautiful summer's like day, warm and zestful as April.

Up early and abroad, meeting an old man, crippled in body and speech, but withal as entertaining as I have run across in my little local excursions.

Unlike many whom I have bet, he never volenteered who he might be, nor did he ask me where I came from, and when he spoke of Melrose, I was twice as interested in the points he made, since he, throguh his description of the place, obviously did not know I was acquainted with it. Hiss praise of Aunt Cammie and C. B. confermed to that which I always hear from those who understand that I know them. He spoke of the original Henry holdings as being in the neighborhood of 12,000 acres. I suppose that inheritances have cut this acreage somewhat, but as I understand it, the present plantation is fairly imposing in measurements. ~~xxxxx~~ One certainly can ride for miles and still be on Henry property.

The old man spoke much of agriculture and his enthusiasm for diversification of crops, which, I believe, is not widely practiced here. He also spoke of advantages in raising cattle, and of sillage which is kept in a silo,--not built above ground, but rather in the ferm of a sunken trench where winter feed for the cows, such as cured sillage keeps perfectly. This type of silo I have never seen but it seems there are many of them in neighboring parrishes

I returned home in time for 10 o'clock coffee, and Miss Nellie joined me to explore the written accounts of Little Harp andMason, the road agents of the old Natchez traces. The astonishing fact that one encounters in all these records is that no two of the tales coincide, in fact Claiborne, the historian, gives three separate accounts as to the final capture and end of old Mason, all of which different on all particulares, including even the state in which he died..

~~xxxx~~ Dinner was gave with political talk, if, indeed, Louisian operaters in government seats can be dignifed with the word politicians, and after dinner we explore a volume, published under the auspices of L. S. Y., with a laudatory remark about the President of the institution, Mr. Smith, who, since the publication of this volume, has joined the in criminals, wearing stripes and cutting sugar cane. .

A quiet afternoon of reading, and until eight this evening when we all said goodnight.

Dec. 22nd - Friday.

Up before dawn and reveled in a cold shower which nicely cut the warmth and humidity of this strange December weather.

The sky was overcase with thick blankets of gray clouds, save for a little slice of sky in the east where the rising sun was, speading a gorgeous copper along the horizon and half way up toward the zenith. Frank brouth me before seven, and then I start d out for a walk, in spite of his observation that it would seen be raining.

I went down the lane as far as Montrose,--about three miles, I reckon, and there the first rain drops started. I talked for a while in the garage while the rain increased in intensity, and within a few minutes the enitre length of the lane back to Melrose was a quagmire. As no cars came along headed toward home, and x as I didn t care to spend the rest of my life, even though at the moment I was high and dry there, I started out toward home in mud 'most up to my knees, my shoes slipping at the heel and the mud scrunching in and out of the sides of my shoes. When most home, a care came along, and a nice youth stopped to give me a ride, although by that time I was soaked and begraggled. He stopped at the saloon at the bridgehead, purchased a bottle of port and shared it with me, and when done, taking me straight home to Melrose.

I got into my shower again and gave my shoes and clothes a bath, too. Frank has seen me come in, and while I was busy getting rid of the major part of the lane which I had brought with me, he was building a rearing fire, which felt good after all the wet.

All day the rain feel, making up for the time lost during the past two months when it doesn't seem that it has scarcely rained at all.

Miss Nellie came over and read for a while and after dinner I buised myself with all the good things which the noon mail had brought me. The thoughts of these friends whence came these tokens of good will and affection did away with thoughts of reading, and so the afternoon slipped by while I drank in the happiness that these symbols of friendship had brought to make my Christmas a happy one.

A while before dupper, I want over to Aunt Cammie to go over the clippings and letter which I had received regarding Louisiana in genera and particularly about Gayarre. We both were enchanted over the Gayarre review which had come with the clippings and the Gayarre volume which I had already opened before the tea-time came 'round. No soonerxxxx had we gotten deep into a discussion regarding certain aspects of the Gayagre business than a knock came at the Door. It was Regis, asking if he should bringin in more wood,--a job which is always taken care of by Frank. Obviously he wanted to get something off his chest. It was merely that he would be taking Saturday as a holiday, and so-----which I suppose meant he was ready for his Christmas present, but intentional y or otherwise, Aunt Cammie didn't had it out. As soon as he was gone, Sam Brown, the scoundrel, appeared.

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Dec. 22nd - continued.

Sam wanted to know if "Miss" Henry needed some more wood. "Miss" Henry's wood box was already bulging but she would have another armful . And Sam Brown had something on his mind. "Well, I tells yha, Miss Henry", I'se gwine take de morrow off".

"But, Sam Brown, " the Madam replied, "just how do you think I am going to live to morrow or the next day or the next if you all take time off and I ain't got wood tomorrow or the next day. Do you all care? Of course you don't, but I'll tell you one thing, I aint died of cold yet and I aint goin to".

"Yaaasum, Miss Henry, that's right," came back the typical Sam Brown answer. "You ain't forze yet, and you ain't gwine to neighter. Why if I have to, I'll done come myself to fetch you up your wood".

"Oh, go on, Sam Brown, you know perfectly well that you all will be in the big road, just a-carryin on, and you went even give me a thought tomorrow. You know that Bluff never came in today, and you knew you went even think of me tomorrow".

"Oh, yassum, Miss Henry. We shu' all think of you tomorrow, cause tomorrow's Christmas."

"Well, it may be for you, but Christmas wont come for me until the day after, but I wish it wouldn't come at all, you all get so disorganized, all of you, and look here Sam Brown, don't you get drunk the way you did last year, and let them you drag you down throu the cotton rows, your feet in the air and your head in the mud. If you do you'll be a dyin', and what's more, they'll be puttin' you out of the church."

"Oh, yaassum, Miss Henry, you she' am right, Miss Henry."

Whereupon the Madam had picked up a pencil and a little slip of paper, written an order for Sam's Christmas present which he would collect at the store,--and Sam flew out, gleeful that he had again come through with all his "Yaassum" business, and knowing full well that Regis had gotten exactly nowheres.

We resumed our conversation but another tap at the door brought in Henry. "Oh for Land's sake, Henry" greeted the Madam, "if you tell me you aren't working tomorrow, I just goin' to take my hat and start for the big road".

"Yassum" Henry drawled in imitation of Sam. "I can't work tomorrow". But for both the Madam and Henry this was merely a way of having fun at the end of the rainy day, and so after a few minutes Henry was explaining what he expected to do on looms tomorrow, and both Mistress and servant were deep in the problems of seemless tablecloths that could be weoven by the new method Henry had contrived

Dinner or rather supper followed shortly thereafter, and about eight we all said goodnight.

Dec. 23rd. - Saturday.

The rain that had fallen steadily since yesterday morning continued to come down in torrents all through the night, seeming doubly intense by the strong warm winds that carried it almost to the open door leading to the front gallery of my maisonette.

Penn, the big police dog, with snow, the English bull, slept before the screendoor, and when I awoke at six o'clock I had thought of closing the wooden door from the Markee plantation which swings on my front hinges, but I gave up the idea of kindling a fire when I relized that by shutting the door to keep out the dampness, I would autematically deny my sleeping friends of their advantageous places out of the rain, and so I turned over and went back to sleep until Frank arrived with morning coffee half an hour later.

After breakfast, I wrote a little, and at nine I sounded the great Chinese gong on my gallery to let Miss Nellie know I was ready for a bit of reading, but the crash of thunder and the downpour of rain must have deadend the sound, for it was almost ten before she came over.

It was pleasant to sit by the glowing grate, sipping coffee and reading from Dr. Monette's History of Missisppi as out of doors the wind blew madely and the rain continued to descend in buckets.

Just before the plantation diiner bell rang, however, the rain ceased and within a few moments the sun came out, and before half an hour spring had returned

In this region of unexpected intensities, I suppose it is only nautral that the brilliant sunshine and the spanking wind sheul d dry up the roads as fast as the downpower of the last 36 hours had flooded them, and accordingly when I started for a little walk at four o'clock, I found travel on foot over the gravel road as easily accomplished as in times when it hadn't rained for weeks. Only the surface of Cain River showed effects of the cloudburst, for it was inclined toward gray in color rather than the usual bright blue.

After supper we all went over to Celeste's house for an hour to see her Christmas tree, sample some port and fruit cake, and exchange little presents. At eight we said goodnight and se to bed.

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Dec. 24th - Sunday.

Coffee came earlier than usual today, and it was pleasant to lie in bed talking with Frank as he built up a roaring fire. In a place where so much coffee is drunk, it seems as though the best cup of the day is that one about 6:30 when one is still cosy in bed, a fresh fire is being laid and one has a chance to learn much that has gone on during the night from faithful Frank.

Last evening, it seems, the Christmas celebration got under way, and such celebrations along the color line often means something more in the nature of a Roman circus than a church service.

Last night's quote for this plantation revolved about one Anderson who lives on the place. He was in a saloon,--the Green Derby, down the lane a mile or so toward Magnolia Plantation, and with him by way of making merry was his sister and her husband. As drinks went round and round, the husband developed an argument with his wife, and ended up by beating her. To this, however, his brother-in-law protested, saying to the beater, "Look here, Sam, why don't you take your wife home if you want to do that. You know it aint nice to beat her before company".

But Sam resented the interference and drawing a gun, shot at Anderson, the bullet passing sideways through his open mouth, so it took out one teeth but did no other damage. But Anderson, rising up with legimate excitement, drew his gun and fired twice at his brother-in-law, hitting him twice in the arm. The Derby was naturally in an uproar by this time and Sam was taken off to the hospital and Anderson and his sister departed for home. Now I am beginning to understand why Christmas on a plantation where whiskey is so easily available is not all that it is cracked up to be.

Miss Nellie came over at nine and read from Claiborne until noon, when we joined the family,--increased by two or three members for dinner, during which nice Christmas mail arrived, and my heart turned toward New York from whence comes so many evidences of generous ties of friendship and affection.

Aunt Cammie and Miss Nellie came over to my house for afternoon coffee which quickly developed into a parade rather than a pleasant half hour of plantation talk, for it seemed as though half the plantation itself came knocking at the door during that half hour, asking the Madam for a thousand orders for this taht and the other thing about orders for Christmas,--everything from "How about turkeys for tomorrow's dinner? " to"How about the day Mr. Francois and me going in the big road,". Some of the many colored people I thought I knew, and the identity of some was unknown. Somehow I guessed that one of the men was Sam Peace, but I didn't ever get a chance to ask, so many things were popping straight along without interruption. I may have mentioned Sam

Dec. 24th - Sun. Cont.

Peace before, but I am going to run the risk of a repetition since I have recently heard one sentence that concluded the murder tale in which he was mixed up, and I don't want to miss recording that sentence.

As you may recall, Sam Peace was houseman formerly, occupying the job Frank now holds. He lived with his wife in a cabin on beyond the acreage where the swann lake is to be. Sam Peace was having wife trouble, for there was a big black many from Cloutierville who used to visit her surreptitiously and Sam resented her infidelity. While he was working at Melrose, the wife used to be entertaining the big boy from Cloutierville, and when, on returning to his cabin, Sam would discover the visitor just leaving, he would return to Melrose and complaing to J. H. bitterly about the man.

One night he came back to J. H.'s house to air his misery at a time J. H. was exhausted and busy finishing up some work in his home. A revolver was in the top drawer of his desk. Same Peace drawled along about his hard luck, annoying J. H. who while paying scant attention to what he said, did eventually get a little annoyed at the perpetual wail. When Sam got along to that part of his old tale that he usually asked what he could do about such a business, J. H., tired and disturbed as one might be by a drowning fly, autoatically said:"Oh, for God's sake, go kill the bastard", and went on with his work.

Sam fumbled aroud a few minutes longer and then disappered. Half an hour later he returned and to J. H.'s surprise, placed J. H.'s revolver on the table andsaid:"Well, Mister J. H., I done did what you say. I killed alright".

This unexpected and calm announcement, in sharp contrast to the earlier whines, startled J. H., for he realized not only tat the affair would have to go through some sort of a court formality but also it didn't look so good when one considered that it was J. H's revolver that had killed the culprit. And so J. H., hustled out of the house and over toward Sam's cabin to which flocks of negores were converging in response to the gunshot and the screams of hysteria on the part of Sam's wife. Each new comer was bearing a lighted lamp, and each new group added tumult to the excitment by whooping and hollering. In the midst of all this excitement, J. H. found the body of the murdered may, wedged upright between the house and a little outhouse, as though he had run there in terror and had been shot point blank while he was so flattened against the two buildings that he remained upright.

Ofcourse the body couldn't be touched until after the corner had been called and he was hours on the way. The Sheriff had to come from Natchitoches, too, and that took time, while all the while the crowd of morbid curios on-lookers swelled in numbers and in noise.

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Dec. 24th - continued.

Finally the Sheriff and Cornoner arrived, and after talking with J. H. and the members of the Peace family, it was decided that Sam would have to go to town to spend a while in jail until the matter could be put straight on the books. Shortly after they had departed, the big man's brother arrived in an old enclosed Ford from Cloutierville to take the body home for burial. Several excited hands gathered about the mead man s brother to asist in putting the corps into the ford. The whole ~~x~~ business seemed a degree more messy when it was found that because the body had turned stiff during the hours awaiting the arrival of the officials and could therefore not be placed inside the car. It would seem a little indecliate to ask Mrs. Peace for a bed blanket to cover the body, anyway, and when it was discovered that it couldn't be placed in the car, it was merely loaded on the side of the car, the feet sticking forward on the front fender, and with the brother at the wheel, the funeral wagon got under way. Scarcely onto the highway, however, the rear tire exploded, throwing the nerveous bystanders into a momentary panic~~k~~ and of course necessitation a change of tires then and there, the body still poised precariously on the running board.

Eventually the car and ~~h~~ its burden reached Cloutierville and the body was ~~xxx~~ interred. Then, in town, followed a prefunctory hearing, it was decided that Sam Peace had killed the man in a sudden rage when he had discovered his at ~~x~~ dalliance with his wife. Sam accordingly returned to the plantation and things resumed their normal course, except for the darkies who talked much about the excitement, reciting it to anyone who would listen to them. One of the negresses,--I think it was Clemence,--had about the most leveling observation to make about the whole thing because in the first place, Clemence is smart, and in the second place she had some inside track on the whole affiar. And this was the last sentnce Clemence had to say:"Well, it done make no matter, Sam Peace killin dat man, but I don't recken why he done ate a plate of soup wid him firs, 'fore chasing him out and shootin' him."

And this is the end of this tale, and about the end of today's diary, for supper shortly followed this parade of plantation people, and after dinner we sat for a while before the Franklin stove, and I went home to listen to Orson Wells programme with Lionel Barrymore doing Dicken's famous Christmas story.

Dec. 25th - Monday.

I woke at five, got up and threw some big chunks of wood on my fire and jumped back into bed, for I love to watch the relections of the flames in the big eastern window before dawn comes up and bletts them out.

At six Frank arrived with coffee and a Christmas package from Aunt Cammie, a little disappointed, I think, that he didn't find me asleep so that he could make a rearing fire and leave the package before he left.

A hurried shower, and over to my typewriter to get off a flock of letters before breakfast which arrive at eight, after which Miss Nellie arrived and we read until Aunt Cammie came for coffee, shortly after which Sister and the Dr. arrived, and so the morning were along. About dinner time the dark clouds began dissolving into mists, then turning to rain, so that by the time the dinner bell rang, it was dark and damp and cold outside, making the festive board twice as gay. Gumbo filet, turkey with oyster dressing, cauliflower, roast pork, potatoes, greens, hot buiscuits, cornbread, cranberry sause, pickles, jelleys and Heaven knows what, so that by the time demi-tasses arrived everyone was almost under the table.

All during the morning the explosion of firecrackers had kept one in mind of Southern Christmas, and from around eight-thirty, J. H. had been in the plantation store which is always open on Christmas morning. I had visited it early to see all the hands,-men only,-come by to wish the propriter of the plantation greetings, and incedentally to partake of the good cheer which is always provided without stint at such times. The counters were loaded with wine, gin and whiskey, and to each of these who came good cheer was offered in abundance. As each was welcomed, he was asked what he would like for Christmas, some choosing overalls, some fireworks, some tobacco,--and some of these who had been on the place longer were given suits. The holiday spirit was in the midst of this gathering, and it was exhilerating to hear their full throated ~~lxfxxxx~~ laughter and the funny little cries of gaity that welled up as the good cheer was trickling through them. It reminded me of other Christmas gatherings I had known in Manhattan where the President of one organization or another had sponsored or acquiesed to gaiety and good cheer on the threshold of this day of days. For myself such gatherings leave a little to be desired for I cannot help thinking about such vast subjects as a greater distribution of wealth and other topics which are certainly out of order at a time when everyone is trying so hard for a moment to catch or manufacture a Christmas semblance of good will toward men. And I couldn't help admiting to mysalf that in reality Ignorance is bliss, and at least for the moment these darkies were enjoying the moment without the sobering effects of wonder at the set-up in which all mort ls find themselves.

I must say there is much to Sabina's theory and those of others I know who provide the poor with money for Christmas, and are done with the business, for that at least given the needy a chance to choose their own happiness and the donnor escapes the necessity of witnessing a prolonged and dissatisfying expression of unconvincing

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Dec. 25th - continued.

At coffee time in late afternoon, Frank arrived with a tray with a generous portion of fruit cake. I sampled it and found it good and I was glad to share it and talk of things local for a little while before the fire before getting back to my machine.

All the servants were sent h me early and so we had a cold supper a little after five. Red wine and cold turkey make a fitting repast for the close of the Christmas Day, and I did justice by it. We sat and talked for while in Aunt Cammie's room, turning over Christmas mail and laughing at Cammie because she couldn't remember some of the people who had sent them because they didn't sign their last names.

In my cards was one that I was unfamiliar with because I had never heard the name before. Thanks to a little note attached to it, I discovered it was from the traveling companion I had coming down here,--someone who had been on the train from Washington to Bristol, I think, with whom I had talked with so much pleasure. As I had never learn the persons name, this card was doubly interesting to me.

I went home at eight, listened to the radio for while and so to sleep.

December 26th - Tuesday.

I am not sure if I have lost the sheet I wrote for today, and so I shall jot down a couple of lines as a guarantee.

The dawn was dampish,--very, and it drizzled and poured all morning.

Miss Nellie came over early and together we prowled through Caliborne and his account of the Aaron Burr conspiracy, which seems much more tremendous as one explores the dta in more detail, and in a way it would appear that the most extraordianry thing about it was that in spite of the fact that scores of people must have been concerned with it in one capacity or another, no shred of evidence was ever turned up to acutally indicate that Burr himself was ever plotting anything, although circumstances make it appear that he was doing his best to stir up a rumpus that would terminate in a conflict with Spain, where upon he would deftly pick a plum in the form of Louisiana and possibly Texas for hiself. To have managed all the intrigues that he must have in engineering this gigantic scheme surely stamps him as a genius even th ugh his whole fabric of empire fell into shreds.

Dinner was a little hurried, with Miss Nellie on the alert to be ready to ride with J. H. when he left for Natchitoches, so that she might catch her bus there for Shreveport.

Joe had a great deal to say to her about the dangers of the trip, how cars might collide or go into the ditch, and I believe that this did make her nervous, although I suppose he didn't realize how much.

But Miss Nellie did get away in time, and because of the slippery roads and a series of circumstances, there was an accident to one of the two busses going to Shrevport, the first stopping suddenly and forcing the one fol owing to apply its brakes so quickly that the later skidded and went into the ditch. All in all, I guess the journey was ab ut as harrowing as the rehearsal Joe had given.

The sun came out for a little while in the xxxxxx afternoon, and I took a short walk to the bridge and back, but it was a little to muddy to be pl asant walking.

In the evening, the Madam and I read for a spell beefre the Franklin steve and so goodnight.

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December 27th - Wednesday.

I arose early, fussed with my fire a bit, but leaped back into bed again until Frank came. I had planned to take a long walk this morning, but when Frank said that is was tending toward rain, I relinquished the idea and stayed under the covers until after seven.

The morning flew by pretty fast, what with a considerable correspondence to be taken care of and some notes to make on 19th century plantation life.

Dinner came and went with a reduced number at the board, but snatches of conversation interested me much, and while I didn't participate much, I did manage to askk a few questions, the answers to which intrigued me much,--not so much from the clarity of the responses, for they really weren't answers, but I delighted in the stimulation they gave to my curiosity.

We were speaking of some mulato children living nearby,--I believe their name is Jones, and the family has control of quite an acreage hereabouts. It seems that three of the children drove to Chicago yesterday in 22 hours, and said they would stay as long as their pecans money held out. Somewhere in this discussion of the Jones family I heard this remark: "Yes, they get along as well as you could expect, but of course you can't expect much because they don't have any influence regarding taxes, etc." I gather that it pays to be in with the assesors, the politicians and the bureaucrats.

Something eles interesting was recounted too. Some mulato youths of 17 or 18 from Natchitoches were down here the other night at a nearby saloon where they had enough to drink. At a late hour they employed someone to drive them back home. One lived at east Natchitoches, on the east bank of the Cain or Red River, and the others lived on the west bank. Natchitoches itself is 20 miles north of here. The boys who undertook the job of driving them home thought to play a joke on them in their uncertain condition, and accordingly drove them 10 or 15 miles south of here to Cleutierville, letting one boy out on one side of the Caine River, telling him that it was East Natchitoches, and delivered the other two boys to the other side of the bridge, telling them that they were not home. I don't know what happened next but I think the three inebriated youths succeeded in getting themselves locked up in the Cleutierville jail,--if any.

In any event, the next day dawned, and the parents of the wondering boys learned of what had happened to their off-spring, and brought charges of kidnapping against the youths who had played the prank. They in their turn were clapped into Natchitoches jail. The next move, of course, was toward J. H., to help them

Dec. 27th - continued

~~them~~ get the second batch out of jail. It would appear that a white man cuts more ice in such matters than the mulatto, and of course J. H. drove up to Natchitoches, somehow got them released on the $2,000 bail that had bet set, and so that made the relatives happy at least. When Aunt Cammie heard of this, however, she laughed at the whole business and said: "Aint J. H. a sight? Why if you went to buy the whole bunch in jail, they wouldn't be worth $2,---- all put together."

And it seems that while there, J. H. thought it would be a good time to get Anderson out on bail, too, for it seems that after the Christmas shooting of his brother in law, he had become a guest of the county. And so Anderson was let out, too. And it seems that one of the boys didn't have any parents present at the time of J. H.'s appearance to use his influence in getting them out on bail, and so he stood for the asserted one. It goes without saying that This brought forth an observation from Aunt Cammie who laughingly asked J. H. ~~if~~ why he didn't empty the whole jail while he was about it.

But I suppose it is this sort of consideration for the depressed section of the population which makes the white man loom ever larger in the eyes of the colored section, and of course it is readily understandable why everyone thinks that J. H. is one of the best friends they have. I presume there are few people in his position, too, who would bother about such business, and it is only natural that he should occupy a place in the mind of color somewhere close to Saint Peter.

After supper Aunt Cammie and I read for a while from Autobiography of an Albrette and from the book by Lyle's grandmother, whose name was something like Elizabeth Lyle Saxon. Her book of reminescences of the Confedrate War ~~xxx~~ is splendid, and her use of steng words and her regad for the negro remind me so much of her grandson.

Nine o'clock came quickly and so to bed.

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Dec. 28th. - Thursday.

Up and abroad before sun up, with a golden glow shimmering along Cain River, save for the tiny bays reflected the black shadows of the pines that stand along the route of the old dirt road.

I hadn t walked for several days and the fresh air felt bracing as I skipped puddles down the lane as far as Montrose.

As I arrived, John Heims, who had dined at the house frequently, passed by in an old rattletrap with three other boys. He stopped and asked me if I wouldn't like to ride, and [illegible] hopped in and jitneyed along as far as Natchitoches with him

It was about nine when we reached town, but fortunately the morning train tweard Montrose was late, and so I caught that and rode back several miles and walked from there home.

Dan and Joe met me in the lane, going in the opposite direction, and in response to their invitation, I got in and rode back as far as the saloon whence we returned to the sotre where I found Frank who got the key to the old schoolhose where all the plantation childre used to learn their three "R"s. Hence home and some correspondence before dinner.

In the afternoon six or seven people called, an old man of 84 and his wife, their son and his wife, his grandson of some 18 summers and some other people. The old man had been a local lawyer in his day, - Marborough, or some such name and had handled legal affairs for the plantation. I took the men under my wing and pointed out the salient features of the African House, the Saxon cabin, my maisonette, etc. After they had departed, I worked some before dinner or supper as the evening meal is at Melrose.

About four o'clock it occured to me that it was just about two months ago today that I left New York for Louisiana, and it was illuminating to take stock of the impressions that I had had before arriving, the day I arrived and then two months after,--how some of those impressions had altered, how something of understanding about negroes had widened a little, and most of all how deeply my admiration for these I had know for such a short time had grown.

Knowing nothing about the riddle of color before I arrived, I find now after two months on a Louisiana plantation that I am more perplexed by it, than I was before. It would help out a lot if I could ever find out if the negro is susseptable to education, if he can remember anything from yesterday's happenings and experiences, and if can, through education or an improved social status, ever anticipate eventualities of the morrow. It would appear that the white person has done mighty little along the two latter lines, and guessing about the capabilities of the person of color is accordingly difficult.

After all the prattle I have heard in the North about the necessity of bringing education and a sense of responsibility to

Dec. 28th - continued.

the negro, I have about made up my mind that it would perhpas not be a bad idea to exert concurrent proslyting on both colored and white. Without bothering to examine why, I sometimes find my mind wondering off to China when I contemplate the status of the South. No one can deny that the Chinese reached an extraordinary degree of culture,-- in limited numbers -- for at the same time no one can deny that hundreds of millions of Chinese are lacking in everything that man considers essential for his existence. And I wonder how it is that when a great section of the globe can thrive so mightily in philesophy and the amenities for a very limited few, that they seem totally incapable of learning how to govern for the benefit of all. And sometimes my mind turns back to Pompeii before 79 A. D., when husbandmen cultivated the slopes of Vesuvius, and wealthy patricians built fine cities at its base. I wonder if these men were justified in disregarding the evenutalites that became such a devastiating reality, and should they have tried to anticipate the catastrophe or was there a 99 chance to 100 that the top never would blow off? And is the South like a great hidden dome of black oil that will swell out vast depressed caverns and never come to the surface until some better dawn breaks and a use found for it when it will come into its own. Of course there probably weundn't have been much chance for a refinement of oil that might have been discovered in the middle ages, and so must we content ourselves with the understanding that we are now all living in such a social set up that neither care to inquire or is able to contrive a use for this vast flood of crude? One nice thing about a discussion of the whole problem is that everyone has a panacea for it, with those who have lived most remotely from it being most certain about their theories while those that live closest to it seemingly the most confused, if indeed, they contemplate it at all.

But this is supposed to be a Journal and not a public forum, and so I shall let the matter ride for treatment in another and more appropriate setting. And parenthetically, I must add, I'm afraid that is usually the conclusion everyone makes on this point.

At six, Aunt Cammie, Joe, J.H, Celeste and I drove down to Cloutierville to have dinner with Dr. and Mister. The air was snappy and there was a hint of snow, so that inside the fires on the hearths seemed twice as gay. Dinner was delicious, turkey, waffles and syrup, and fine salade andwithal fine pieces of glass ware to make the occasion twice as festive. Conversation was dull, as conversation must be when the multitude revolves about the baby, but there is no great loss without some gain, and of course the saving of wear and tear on the conversational powers was enormous. The Henry's eat fast and are an active clan, so that in spite of the entertainment, we were all back home by eight o'clock and after a bit of reading beofre the Franklin stove, Aunt Cammie and I said good night.

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Dec. 29th - Firday.

Another beautiful dawn, gray-rose giving way to silver and blue with a brillian sun following to eut the frost on my gallery steps and soften the rim of ice on the great iron sugar bassin, which these many years ago was relieved of its original duties to act as a bassin for water hard by the "pit" where Aunt Cammie places some of her more fragile tropical plants during December and January.

Back home before breakfast had arrived, and bathed and shaved before I heard Frank's footsteps on the gallery and my tray had arrived. Last night Uncle Whitefeet had been so frisky, tearing around from sofa to chair, but the little staircase to the balcony and thundering down again, that I had invited him to take an evening stroll which must have been extended since I failed to find him waiting for me on the gallery when I returned from my walk. But he was there when Frank arrived with the breakfast, and so he joined me in some bacon and toast, as a kind of dessert after he had breakfasted heavily on his canned food.

Food out of the way I tackled a stack of mail, writing until 11:3- when I took it to the store, stopping on my way back for a little chat with the Madam before her great Franklin stove.

Just as I was leaving, the dinner bell rang, and so we both marched down together.

The mail had arrived, and with dinner and the family out of the way we looked through a copy of LIFE that had come through from a thoughtful friend, and we found it of particular interest to us, containing as it did, many a fine photograph of Gone With The Wind sets and a flock of South Carolina plantation scenes, including one of Middleton Place on the Ashley River which I have loved so long because it seems to combine the low country on a Versailles pattern, thus uniting the sweet unbelievable opulence of the one in the classic, well ordered lines of the other.

There was a ltter too from Sabina, advising that a coat would arrive in the same mail, and for this package I dashed to the store, returning to the Madam to examine it, take off the tags and rewrap in preferation for re-mailing to a friend living in Louisiana but on the other side of the Mississippi, a most admirable person who freezes every winter, thanks to the obsession of her brother who prevents the building of a good sized fire at all times for fear of burning down the house. With characteristic forethought to remove any suspicion that she had purchased the coat for her, Aunt Cammie sent a letter, explaining that the garment had come to her at this season, and asked her if she would not be so good as to pass it along to someone else if she herself had no use for it, and further explaining that she herself seldom wore a coat and since she already had an ample supply, she herself couldn't use it. It's a good game, I think, and I feel sure that everyone is so socially consituted that each will play the role with serious mein, yet never unmindful ofthe actualities involved in the matter.

Dec. 29th - cont.

Aunt Cammie came over for coffee at two, and we talked of a variety of things, including the most auspicious time to take over the property where we propose to create the swann lake., which we hope to get under way during January while J. M. and Celeste are in Mexico. Frank came in to fix the fire, and he pointed to the beautfful pieces of stained glass that I have leaning up against one of the panes in my great window, saying that he was coming over and work all night with me to turn all the panes into color just like the little pieces. To this Aunt Cammie remarked that he and I were getting just as bad as Frank and Mr. Lyle and that both of us would end up by doing so much foolishness that we would all be in the big road before we got through with it. To this sally, Frank giggled with glee and said: "I sure does like it when Miss Sabina or Mr. Lyle or Mr. Francois is here with us all",--and with the remarks on this score that followed by Aunt Cammie I felt more than ever how marvelously she unites the role of mistress of Melrose and friend and protector of her servants of color who adore her.

Henry Hettzog was busy during the day, threading a loom on which Aunt Cammie expects of weaving a seamless tablecloth, and so after our little conversation, she skipped along to see how Henry was progressing and I went back to my typewriter. At four I went over to the big house to pick up a package which I had promised to deliver to Celine in her cabine a mile away on the other side of Cain River. In the library I found Aunt Cammie entertaining some college proffessor and his wife, and I stopped to caht for a moment with them. Then I gathered up my duffle bag and started out, stopping for a moment at the store

On the way to the lane, I passed by the store and found Frank there with his first born, Tony, a youth of some 20 summers who is here from New Orleans where Lyle has found him a couple of jobs since Tony was forced to leave Melrose a year and a half back because some of the powers hereabout found him to recalcitrant when drink up set his sense of proportion on one or two occassions. Tony said he wanted to come to see me tomorrow as he had messages from Mr. Lyle for me.

And so I continued by journey down the road, across Cain River, on beyond the saloon, echoing with hilarity from dark skinned habitues from within, and so on up the road to Celine's. The dogs announced my coming and old Joe met me at the gate,--good old Joe, always so courteous and kindly, with a glow of refinement shinning from within, noticible in so many of the older darkies. Joe now is 84 and all his long life with Celine, the Bohemian of X 86, I instinctively feel sorry for him at the seeming misfit his domestic surroundings must have always made him feel.

Celine welcomed me cordially, too, and entering the cabin offered me a chair before the hearth, at the same time drubbing two of the hounds curled up on the dirt and broken bricks before the fire, and spanking a couple of cats and three chickens which were huddled near the embers.

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Dec. 29th continued.

We talked of her rheumatism as she inspected the garments I had brought, and she seemed for a moment to forget her pains as she held up the woolen sweater to her shelder as a slip of a girl might do with a new evening gown.

We talked for a spell regarding the weather, how the house next door had once threatened Celine's house when the former burned on a windy night, and all the while Celine was busying herself in searching out a likely brace of chickens which she eventually rounded up amidst vast noise both from the cackling hens and the accompanying bark of the dogs. Celine returned with them before the fire and said she wondered if I would carry them home for the Madam, but I said definitely that I would not, since Aunt Cammie said that Celine was to keep her chickens and not go xy flying around the nieghborhood with them. Celine chuckled at this, urged me again to take them to "Maman" as she styles Aunt Cammie, and when I again refused, she relinquished her hold on them and spanked them out of the cabin.

In the mean time old Joe had been rumaging around in an armoir and had brought forth a bottle of Blackberry wine which he gave me with a glass to pour myself a drink, he joining with me to toast the season. I drank it with as much satisfaction as any toast I had ever drunk, and after another cigarette, said goodbye to them both. Celine assured me on the way out that she would pray to St. Anthony so "Maman" would find the keys she has recently misplaced, and Joe, walking with me to the second gate, which me well for the new year, and taking off his hat, shook hands and said Au Revoir.

On the road back to Melrose, I met Edward, their grandson who lives with them and we exchanged the holiday greetings, and so on my way to the big house where supper was waiting and the Dr. and his wife with the baby who had come to dine with us.

For a little while after they had left, the Madam and I sat before the Franklin stove, reading from the Autobiography of an Aigrette, pausing from time to time to discuss interesting bits of information it reveals concerning these beautiful birds, with many an interesting personal note by the Madam who knows every Island where Bird City is located and the McKillheneys whose efforts and foresight have saved the aigrettes from extinction. And so to bed at eight.

Dec. 30th - Saturday.

There was a slight frot last night, but not so evident as Friday night's. Like so many features of nature in this delicous delta country, even the frost seems more of a design for the sake of variety than a natural consequence ofsome universel law, operating in conjunction with a lowering of the thermometer.

Already I imagine I notice the lengthening of the days from their low ebb of a week ago, and a brilliant dawn seemed impatient to break this morning, and at seven, I was delighted to hear Frank's faithful footstep on the gallery.

Until ten I worked at my typewriter when the Madam came for coffee, which, incidentky was vile, being "stong enough to make you whip your Mammy", as Aunt Cammie expressed it. It seems that poor Elmer can't ever make coffee twice the same,--which, perhaps, is fortunate, since the last time always seems worse than the one before last. Aunt Cammie has conjured her to measure it, and hal a dozen time Frank has shown her just how much should be put in the dripper and how much water should be added, but all of this to no avail since Elmer, after each succeeding complaint is register-ed, always explains that "I done forget each time to measure". Of course the first dozen or so times, Patience keeps control of things and Hope holds the promise of a better cup on the morrow, but tomorrows come and go, and Elmer continues to forget, and just as one is engaged in pondering about what can be done for the betterment of the race, Elmer turns out one of her incomparable cups which she blandly labels "coffee".

A couple of uninteresting women called to spoil the rest of the Madam's morning, and Frank's boy, Tony, came by to have a chat with me. Frank joined us shortly, and all three of us sat before the fire and talked non-sense until dinner time

The mail was light, and so shortly after our demi-tasse, the Madame and I went over to the bindery where Henry is setting up a new batch of thread for the Madam, and while there Aunt Cammie showed me a couple of inter sting items which she had collected from Heaven k ows where. One was a real Dutch oven, a conical shaped oven in metal, cut through the long way with another piece of metal, divinging the cone in half. On this shelf formed by the bifrision, one used to place the dough for buiscuits, then stand the cone facing the fire place, so that the heat and reflection, caught in the metal cone would bake them as speedily and satisfactoril as an ordinary stove oven would . The second item was a Vicksburg, Mississippi, newspaper, published on July 3rd or 4th, 1863, when the city fell to General Grant. Being framed on both sides by glass, one could readily read the news on one side, and note the design of the wall paper on the other, for the print paper had been exhausted long before the city fell and wall paper was all that was left to print the news on. I must get Miss Nellie to read the news items for me,--Aunt Cammie remarked about a reference in one paragraph to "fricasee of kitten", for as everyone knows, Vicksburgh had starved for weeks. As this is the final edition of the paper, I am sure many a collector would prize it, as I knew I would.

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Dec. 30th - concluded.

I worked for a couple of hours in the afternoon and then took a short brisk walk in the bracing, bright sunshine and so back to the big house for supper at five, but each day supper gets later and later as poor Elmer gets more and more lost in her wool gathering.

For myself, I enjoy the supper hour much more than dinner. I suppose there is an element of let-down for everyone at the close of the day, and there is something about it that is closely akin to a leisurely ~~eff~~ cup of coffee after breakfast on Sunday morning in Manhattan, when the job of eating is finished, a day of rest is ahead of one, and a cup of coffee signals the first cigarette of the day, and the cigarette unlocks an endless world for speculation, theorizing and just plain talk.

Another thing I like about supper at Melrose is the fact that the blessing always seems a little funnier, and I suppose any meal that starts off with suppressed laughter is bound to rank as a favorite. Before Aunt Cammie has arrived, usually one or two of the boys have taken a rapid glance over the board, and snitched a dainty morsel before anyone has dreamed of sitting down. With the arrival of the Madam, all of us standing before the fireplace join her at table, and while we are getting our chairs comfortably placed, one or the other, and probably J. H. has sampled a buscuit of bacon or something before Madam say: "Alright, J. H." and we all bow our heards."

If one is to suppose that J. H. follows the wording of the blessing as his mother gives it when he is not present, it would be safe to assume that it goes something like this: "Lord, make us thankful for these gifts, and save us at last, for Christ's sake, Amen". But J. H., through years of practice and an honest desire like the excellent business man he is, to get the matter at hand over and done with dispatch, he mutters the entire blessing with such a muffled voice that he is over and done before I ever realize he has started. By the time it would take me to start with "Lord, make us", J. H. has rattled off the whole lingo and in the same breath added: "Pass the pickles, Ann". Anywhere else this charade would seem like sacrilege, but at Melrose it seems more like a man yelling: "By God, I want you to understand I am an atheist."

After supper we read for a while before the Franklin stove, finishing the Cigrette autobiography, and wondering how the author had the courage to write the last paragraph, having the bird resolve to say a good word to Saint Peter for the builder of Bird City, who of course was the author himself.

And so at eith, to bed.

Dec. 31st - Sunday.

A glorious morning, much sunshine and a temperature too high to make this last day of 1939 seem anything but a soft mellow morning in May. It was difficult to imagine the news reports from New York that told of freezing weather and snow.

Aunt Cammie came over for coffee and afterwards we took a little tourn through the gardens which were bright with red berries and yupon clusters amid the green foliage, while a torrent of narcissus and hyacinthes make all out of doors seem like a vast and opulent conservatory.

Much family for dinner, after which some of them went hunting while sister, Aunt Cammie and I went for a ride,

along Cain River for many miles, Aunt Cammie pointing out many of the points that have lingered on in history through the beautiful old houses here and there which flourished once before ante-bellum times had been cut short by General Banks Army had passed along this same roade, burning and fighting, leaving so many scarred ruins and unmarked graves in the wake.

We drove beyond Monett's Ferry, turning off below there to find a little house whence a woman had written Aunt Cammie, saying she had an old armoir to sell. The armoir itself was huge and of poor wood, interesting us not at all, but the family who owned it excited much speculation as to what the future might hold for the numerous progeny which toddled about the mean little porch and tumbled around the two roomed little house. The woman, although young, seemed prematurely old while the youthful father in clean overalls, siimed like any nice farm boy whom one might run across in such a locality as might guarantee an agricultural schooling, although I am sure that circumstances in this remote region precluded anything of this sort. And what of the little children who stood aimlessly about? One little girl had something in her eye which her mother said she had been bothered with since the day before. She had thought of putting vaseline in the child's eye to remove the object but "she is so mean" the mother hadn't done anything about it. I suppose the child might have been five or six, and was probably the eldest of the several children. And what with or without this and that, I have nox doubt, that this healthy young looking male and this prematurely aged mother will continue to build "stairs" as each year the highest stair mounts higher and the succeeding ones rise accordingly.

Back home for supper at six, and sister departed shortly thereafter while the Madam and I read for a bit before the Franklin stove. Aunt Cammie had always read Tennysen's The Dying of the Year to her Mother on New Year's eve, but somehow in spite of the fact that we had found the volume for its reading tonight, circumstances operated against it, and so we said goodnight early and I slept the old year out.